



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

1016

Bought from J.S. Cox, Literary Repository 1/65,
no. 898.

1016 C. 1334

SCENES
IN
BETHANY,
A COURSE OF LECTURES,
ON THE
ELEVENTH CHAPTER
OF THE
GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN,
By L. Bonnet,

TRANSLATED BY A LADY.

"He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."—1 *John* iv. 5.

LIMERICK :
C. O'BRIEN, PRINTER, 108, GEORGE-STREET,

1837



DEDICATION.

TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE VILLAGE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD OF ADARE.

MY DEAR FRIENDS—When absent from you in the winter of 1836, I passed some weeks at Frankfort on the Maine; I there constantly attended the Lectures of a Clergyman whose preaching appeared to me particularly calculated to impress upon his hearers the abundant love of Christ to Man. My spirits were much depressed at the time by the alarming illness of a very dear child, for whose recovery I since have had much cause to be thankful, but still preserving a grateful sense of the comfort derived from M. BONNET's doctrines, I have endeavoured to translate a short course of his lectures, in the hope that their influence might be extended among my own neighbours. To you then do I offer them with sincere wishes for your spiritual and temporal welfare.

For the instruction of my young readers, who are accustomed to seek for texts from the Bible, I have by notes directed them to the passages from whence the Scriptural quotations are taken. Humble as my abilities may be, I should indeed esteem it a blessed privilege were I permitted to employ them in the service of a tender Master, who has promised that a

cup of cold water offered in the name of a disciple will not be rejected—we have passed many years of our earthly pilgrimage in the same parish—we have often met together in prayer, and knelt around the same altar, and that the blessings of Divine Grace may be abundantly poured down upon us all, is the sincere desire of

Your affectionate friend,

C—— D——.

Adare, July, 1837.

LECTURE I.

LAZARUS, MARTHA, AND MARY.

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.—*St. John ii. 1.*

“ The Christian religion, though appearing to have for its sole object our happiness in a life to come, constitutes our only true happiness in this.” This admirable truth, thus expressed by a celebrated French author,* is neither understood by worldly-minded people nor duly appreciated by those who have had the benefit of its experience. No doubt that we, creatures of a day, strangers and pilgrims, do well not to expect happiness in a world polluted by sin. This is not a place of rest, we should indeed deceive ourselves if we sought it here. We who are the ministers of him who had not on this earth where to lay his head, are not to encourage in those to whom we speak in his name the anxiety we all have to possess before our appointed time, to rest before we have finished our course, and to reap before we have sown ; many who know the Gospel only by name have fallen into a great error by imagining that in order to bring their hearts into due subjection to it, they have only to impose on themselves painful sacrifices, and unfruitful self-denials, but far from seeking to stifle our best feelings, or to paralyse our noblest faculties, the Gospel of Christ exalts and sanctifies them, by restoring them to the original destination from which they had been led away by sin.

* Montesquieu.

The Gospel properly understood sanctions the natural feelings of the heart proving the truth of these inspired words. “ *Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” Our Redeemer’s whole life was an evidence of this fact. Though the principal object of his mission was to seek and save that which was lost, yet the sight of our temporal sorrows moved him to much compassion—there were no troubles he did not hasten to relieve, no sufferings for which his tender pity did not find some alleviation.

Now as ministers of his word, and wishing “ *to declare unto you all the counsel of God,” we ought not, either in public or private, to neglect this very interesting part of our Lord’s Divine Mission. We ought, my dear brethren, to lay before you unreservedly his whole work ; his whole life. When speaking to you of Jesus Christ, (and he should be the constant theme of our instructions,) though we usually must represent him to you, as descending from Heaven, to deliver us from the guilt which is consuming us, as expiating our sins upon the cross, as dying for our offences and rising again for our justification, yet we must not pass over in silence those affecting passages in his terrestrial life which he passed in assuaging the sorrow and healing the diseases of those who were brought unto him. Besides, dear friends, in shewing you Jesus Christ as your comforter, we shew him

* 1 Tim. iv. 2.

† Acts xx. 27.

to you as your Saviour, he comforts by saving you, and by destroying the cause delivers you from the bitter consequences of sin.

We think in the whole of the Gospel history there is not a more affecting incident, or one more calculated to instruct us and shew us the love of Jesus, than the illness, death, and resurrection of one of his Disciples—it is recorded in the Chapter from whence we have taken our text.

If your mind be capable of appreciating all that is great, noble, and divine, in that love which the Lord felt for us—if you have ever known affliction, or are now suffering under severe trial, you will delight in coming with me to the grave of Lazarus, the friend of Jesus. You will love the sad abode of death when Jesus is present to brighten it with light and life; you will love the sorrows of the family of Bethany when Jesus draws near and brings them comfort—you will even love the sufferings of this mortal life, when Jesus pours a healing balm into your wounds. After weeping with Martha and Mary over the tomb of their lamented brother, perhaps your tears, like their's, may be changed into songs of praise—O! death where is thy sting, O! grave where is thy victory.—In the course of your life you may possibly find but too many opportunities of applying to yourselves the lessons taught to these afflicted sisters. Who among you hath been spared the trials

attending our pilgrimage in the world? or who can hope to escape them in future? Alas! in addressing the afflicted, do we not address all created beings? it is then for your own sakes we would make known to you the only true Comforter, the Lord Jesus Christ.

My beloved brethren, in the first place, let me beseech you to join us in imploring the blessings of God on the course of lectures we are beginning this day, that our words may not be the mere feeble sayings of a weak sinner, but may prove to be words of Eternal life, and, Oh! may they be accompanied by an assurance of spirituality and power.

The narrative on which we propose to discourse is related to us by St. John—St. John the Disciple whom Jesus loved; he who at the last supper leaned on the bosom of his Master, or rather of his friend, and who appears there to have drank deeply of his Redeemer's love—St. John, who at the foot of the cross, received that most precious bequest, the Mother of the dying Jesus. To St. John the whole Gospel seems comprised in one word, Love: He derives all things from love, he refers all things to love. “* He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.” “† God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” “‡ Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” “§ God so loved the

* 1 John iv. 8. † 1 John iv. 16. ‡ 1 John iii. 1. § John iii. 16.

world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Such was the language of this Disciple; such the prevailing thought of his heart. Jesus was to him far beyond the whole world; he was the very life of his soul, and having lived in extreme intimacy with his Saviour, and being acquainted with his secret thoughts, he was peculiarly alive to all those words and actions which emanated from his mercy and love. This feeling is proved in every page of his writings, and in the passage we are now considering, we see how anxious he was to guide us to the tomb of Lazarus, and to let us see him uniting his tears with those of Martha and Mary, awakening peace and joy in their afflicted bosoms. In order to do this, he breaks off the thread of his story, and introduces this affecting episode before he proceeds to detail the last sufferings of his beloved master; and what an introduction to those sufferings is this tale, shewing so forcibly as it does the depth of his love for those he came to save. St. John records the resurrection of Lazarus with peculiar interest; not only as an eye-witness, but as having sympathised in the affliction of this family with all the warmth of his sensitive and affectionate heart, he knew them, and loved them, because they loved his Master. He enters into the most minute details; let us follow him with deep attention. He at once transports us to a peaceful dwelling at Bethany. "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of

Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

Bethany was a little village pleasantly situated on the east side of the Mount of Olives only a few miles distant from Jerusalem. Jesus had some friend there whose house and hearts were equally open to receive him; there he frequently passed his hours of rest with his disciples, and in the solace of confidence and friendship, forgot the toils of his wandering life, and the sorrows brought on him by the ingratitude of those whose salvation he came to effect. It was a day of rejoicing to Lazarus and his sisters when Jesus favored their humble dwelling with his presence. They were in truth members of that little flock of true Israelites who were waiting for the Messiah, “*the consolation of Israel.” Great was their joy when they were permitted to behold in Jesus Christ the Saviour whom their souls desired, “†as the hart pants after the water brooks.” Great was their joy when they saw that Jesus loved them; that he rested under their humble roof, and spake to them of his blessed kingdom.—Dear friends, you who know by experience the joys of that brotherly love of which our Lord in his mercy permits his children on earth should taste; you who have been taught by the Gospel how to feel and how to love, you can understand the gladness felt by Lazarus and his sisters at those sweet, affectionate dis-

* Luke ii. 25. † Psalms xxxvii. 1.

courses, when Jesus revealed to them the secrets of his heart, and treated them with confidence and love. If you can derive happiness from an intercourse with those you love in Christ, how inexpressible must have been that feeling of peace which our Lord diffused throughout that dwelling, and left abiding in the hearts of its inmates. Now Lazarus and his sisters loved Jesus above all things : we see how they gloried in his affection, in spite of the reproachful name of Nazarine—in spite of the persecutions which had already been raised against him, and even against those who were known to be his disciples. When the mob at Jerusalem, excited by the Scribes and Pharisees, took up stones to cast at him, Lazarus rejoiced in giving him an asylum ; for though he had created worlds he had not where to lay his head. We have reason to believe that Jesus often retired to Bethany, even to the last moment, when he gave his life as a ransom for sinners. Beloved brethren, are your dwellings houses of refuge for the Saviour whose name is still blasphemed in this world ? Do you confess him fearlessly and faithfully before a perverse generation ? Is his name venerated and invoked in your families ? Are your homes what Bethany was to him, when Jerusalem was preparing to crucify the Lord of Glory ? Do those who know not yet the love of Christ find in your dwellings an altar dedicated to his glory ? Is your home sweetened by the peace which emanates from the presence of Christ ? Is it brightened by the light of his truth ? Oh ! my friends, if this be so you will find Jesus in

your hour of trial, what he was to Martha and Mary in their's.

What tender sympathy existed between Lazarus and his sisters, notwithstanding the diversity of their characters ! The love of Jesus was the tie that bound them fast together—where that bond is found happiness must follow. Probably they lived in much seclusion from a world, which ever has been at enmity with God, and that Jesus, his Disciples, and a few faithful Israelites, were the only visitors who enlivened the stillness and solitude of Bethany. St. John tells us that Jesus loved Lazarus—he found in him a mind (rare indeed in this world), which having received and understood his word, was alive to the noble and pure influence of sacred friendship. The friend of Jesus, in his obscure retreat was far greater in the eyes of his Lord than the hero renowned for earthly splendour; he was still in the prime of life, for we learn from tradition that he lived thirty years after his resurrection. We may wonder why our Lord did not employ him as an Apostle, and why he left him in his peaceful home, though he called upon Peter to leave his ship and his nets, and Matthew his receipt of custom, that he might appoint them messengers of glad tidings. But our Lord knew the calling best suited to his children, and allots to each his most fitting station.—His wisdom or goodness was never doubted by Lazarus, and whether he understood his Master's

motives or not, he submitted readily to his will.—
 “What matters it,” he thought “in which way he orders me to manifest my love for him? I submit, even if he called me to no other service, than to offer him my humble residence. Were it his will that I should glorify him only by my sufferings, and worship him upon a bed of sickness, I know he would accept me as kindly as one whom he had sent forth to preach his name before Rulers and Kings. Should the Lord call you to works of Charity and Piety unseen by man, would these be your feelings? Were you only desired to give a cup of cold water in his name, to share your loaf with a hungry beggar, or to whisper comfort to a wretched but obscure sufferer, would you think yourself equally favored by God, as if you were one of those persons whose names are printed in letters of gold, and proclaimed as benefactors of the human race? Or suppose the Lord called you to serve him by “the work of patience,” either by enduring affliction, or bodily suffering, would you think yourself as much honored, as one appointed to spread his truth from the pulpit, surrounded by admiring and crowded congregations? Remember that the Lord looketh on the heart, he doth not regard what man regardeth. How many true followers of Christ, pass unobservedly through the pilgrimage of life, till he who knows the secrets of all hearts, will crown them in the presence of men and angels, “*With an incorruptible crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

* 1 Peter v. 4.

Martha (probably the eldest sister) appears to have been of a totally different character from her brother and sister. She was the St. Peter of her sex—her thoughts and feelings were all displayed by her life and animation. When she had an opportunity of proving her affection for Jesus, we find her restless and occupied, seeking by every means in her power to receive with due respect a guest so worthy of veneration and love. When Jesus appeared, every thing in the house was made use of that could be serviceable to him. It never occurred to her that she might for an instant lay aside her services, and sit at his feet, and hear his word. No, she would not weary him, before he was rested and refreshed with the choicest provisions she could procure for him—though she was far from understanding the thoughts or wishes of Jesus, yet she was sincere and steady in her own method of proving her devotion to him. St. John includes her with the other members of the family whom Jesus loved, and our Lord gives her only a gentle reproof, when he says to her, “†Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful : and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.”

Mary felt and acted differently. She was the St. John of her sex ; her quick feelings were concealed in the depths of her sensitive mind—she felt that none

* 1 Peter v. 4. † St. Luke x. 41.

but her Lord could satisfy the desires of her pious heart. When she saw him, when she listened to him, the world vanished from her sight; her sole happiness was to sit at his feet, to devour with avidity, and lock up in the storehouse of her memory, every word that fell from his divine lips—the visits of our Saviour were too few and too short for her wishes—the hours of his presence flew but too swiftly; she could not bear to waste one moment of them. Like Martha she would have offered him all most dear to her, but she knew that Jesus came rather to give than to receive, and that he who had despised “all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them,” required but one thing, the hearts of his disciples. She could offer him nothing she deemed worthy of him, or even find words to express her adoring love. Her attentive looks, and a few tears which occasionally fell from her eyes, were the only outward signs of her emotions. O! how precious were the moments when she could listen to her Saviour, and hear him speak of the salvation he purchased for his redeemed—of their forgiveness by God—of their reconciliation with God, and of that blessed kingdom, where there could be no more sorrow because there was no more sin.

However, we should be much mistaken if we supposed that Mary’s religion consisted in inactive contemplation, and unfruitful persuasion; no, in one of

* St. Matt. iv. 8.

the last visits that Jesus paid to Bethany, a few days before his crucifixion, St. John tells us, that “*they made him a supper.” It was in Lazarus’ house, and Martha as usual “served.” Mary, wholly devoted to her Saviour, “†took some ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair.” Judas blamed her, saying, “why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?”—“Then said Jesus, let her alone, against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always.” Does not this imply, that she whose whole soul was filled with the love of God, would find that very love an incitement to every good action, and the foundation of all good works and holy living? This is the love which springs up in a regenerated heart—which is felt for him who loved us so well as to give his life for us, and without which Religion would be an empty sound, a barren tree, an unfruitful soil. “‡He that loveth not knoweth not God.” It would be idle of us to say we are Disciples of Christ because we are called by his name, because we may be useful in our generation, and take an interest in the advancement of his kingdom, or because like Martha we may be “careful about many things.” If we do not feel in our hearts the love that seeks the Communion of God—which makes us love his word as Mary did—which changes our hearts, and makes

* St. John xii. 2. † St. John xii. 3—7. ‡ 1 John iv. 8.

us new creatures—which conquers our self-will, and teaches us to deny ourselves; a love that can never perish, that will endure when all other things have passed away—which will be the foundation of our eternal happiness, I say, if we do not feel this love in our hearts in vain may we “* Speak with the tongues of men and of angels;” in vain have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, in vain would we bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and give our bodies to be burned, without love (mind, this is the word of God) we should be as nothing—we should become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” All this would be as nothing in the day of our Lord, when all things shall pass away, love alone excepted. My dear friends, let us take Mary’s example and ask ourselves seriously, what is our faith? what are our hopes? what the motives of our actions? If we love Jesus, and have in him that “† faith that worketh by love,” all is well; but if we feel coldly towards him all is wrong, eternally wrong. Such was the happy family of Bethany, its members were loved by Jesus, they loved him, and consequently loved one another—bound together by that constraining power, they shared all in common, pleasures, pains, hopes and fears, and under this sweet influence they had lived long in peace and joy; but, alas! they dwelt in a world of woe, and must expect misfortunes. A black cloud suddenly darkened their horizon, and announced

* Cor. xiii. 1. † Gal. v. 6.

a coming storm. But they had already given their hearts to Jesus, and knew how to “*§ bear one anothers burthens,*” and they will also see that in trials the Lord multiplies the proofs of his love and grace.—What could they fear? Jesus was their friend: You that are fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, whom God has united by the most endearing ties to run together your earthly course, do you find nothing in this humble dwelling worthy of your desires and imitation? Are you acquainted with that Christian love which contributes so powerfully to soften all that is bitter in life? Do you love one another in Jesus? does his grace reign in your families as it did in the family at Bethany; if so, we trust that you will find pleasure and improvement in following us through their trials as well as through their joys. You will there learn how the friends of Jesus behaved in sorrow, and, O! may you also be taught how to give your hearts in perfect confidence to him.

LECTURE II.

THE ILLNESS OF LAZARUS.—THE GLORY OF GOD.

Therefore his sister sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.—*St. John* xi. 3, 4.

The actual state of human nature would be an incomprehensible enigma to us, if revelation had not

§ Gal. vi. 2.

given us the clue in these few words : “ *By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”— This is the history of the fallen race of Adam, and is the explanation of that inconceivable mystery presented to us throughout all ages and in all countries. If I open the annals of by-gone ages what do I see ? An uninterrupted succession of beings who have appeared for an instant in a scene called life—their birth ushered in by cries of sorrow, their career closed in agonies and death ; first a cradle watered with tears, shortly after the cold and dreary tomb—between these two seasons of sorrow what are the intervening scenes of this sad drama ? Alas ! we need not consult the pages of history, we have only to look around us to know their nature. A few transient rays of light may perchance shed a pale and partial lustre on this melancholy picture, but still we must see that human beings are prone to a thousand miseries, a thousand cares, and a thousand complaints. Every echo replies to the cries of sorrow drawn from afflicted man by the general evil which consumes him. Whole volumes would be insufficient to describe the names and symptoms of all the disorders which are conspiring to imbitter our short life, and appear contending for the mournful privilege of consigning man to the grave, and confounding him with the dust of the earth. Then, as if all this were not enough, man seems to try and multiply evils by the indulgence of his folly and vices.—

• Rom. v. 12.

In vain do we wish to turn from this sad picture and persuade ourselves that it does not exist; in vain do we wish to see light where there is darkness, sweet where there is bitter, good where there is evil; in vain do we try to arm ourselves with stoical insensibility, and raise a bulwark between us and the ills that surround us—we ourselves may become their prey if we refuse to acknowledge that “*all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away.” We may learn by our own fall the utter vanity of our being, could we even humbly confess our sin, study its cause, and seek its remedy; but no, we thoughtlessly tread upon the grave, and are forgetful of death, judgment and eternity. We cannot walk a few steps in the streets of this great city without meeting some of the appendages of death attending our fellow creatures to their last home—we forget that ere long our cheerful circle of friends will be formed into a similar procession to pay us their last tribute of respect.

But no, says one of our fellow sufferers, I do not delude myself thus. Alas! I am but too well aware of the evils connected with this wretched world, I am overwhelmed by them; but what can I do?

Come with me, my brother, and let us visit a Christian family in affliction; perhaps you may there find an answer to your question, and God grant that

* 1 Peter i. 24.

after feeling quite overcome by your troubles, you may happily find their true remedy—I lead you to a bed of sickness—approach it without shuddering—may you find instruction there.

In our last lecture we learned something of the family at Bethany; its members lived peacefully, and rejoiced in the distinguished favor shown them by Jesus. St. John tells us that Lazarus was seized with a dangerous illness—his compassionate and gentle nature does not think it necessary to describe it to us; we may picture to ourselves an affectionate family thus afflicted, and he knows we shall sympathise in Martha's anxieties and Mary's grief.

Lazarus is ill, he is in suffering—What! say you, the favored disciple of Jesus, one whom he calls his friend! is he no more than the rest of mankind exempt from the miseries of life? There are two classes of people who reflect thus, and find in so doing a stumbling block to their faith. One of them (like those selfish Disciples who followed our Lord, not because they loved him, but because he multiplied the loaves and fishes), seek in the Gospel merely temporal advantages, relief from their daily wants, food for their craving appetites, and an anxiety for the enjoyment of a religion which consists in the love of Jesus.

Such people would be content to live entirely for this world, and the gratification of their passions,

as long as they could have any enjoyments in it; and consider the consolations of religion, as a last reserve in case of misfortune: just like a fire insurance which is paid before hand, and never again thought of till the house is actually burnt. Every sacrifice which crucifies the carnal man is beyond them—they take no account of the trials by which God desires to detach them from the world and sanctify them for his kingdom, nor are they ready to submit to his will. Infatuated being, what do you expect to get by following Jesus? Do you suppose that going to him without loving him, but merely as a forlorn hope that you will be miraculously delivered from all earthly cares? Do you expect that he will free you at once from poverty, pain, sickness and death? Do not deceive yourselves—look at Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, sick and suffering; learn by his illness to understand the nature of the Gospel, and what you should seek for there. If you do not love Jesus as your Saviour, you will not find in him a comforter; you will find his yoke uneasy and his burden heavy, when in the hour of trial you open your long neglected Bible, and read these words: “*Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my Disciple.” “† He that loveth father, or mother, more than me, is not worthy of me;” and “he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.” Would you then rest satisfied that you have found what you sought in the Gospel? You will not find comfort there, till you

* Luke xiv. 27. † Matt. x. 37.

have learnt to love Jesus, and till you feel his yoke easy and his burden light. We fear this sort of religion without real devotion to the Saviour, is not confined to worldly people—we are convinced that these roots of bitterness are springing up in many Christians unconsciously to themselves—they are seeking only their own gratification in the Bible, and would readily abandon their Saviour if they thought they could do without his grace, or the consolations of his word. Can we then feel surprised at the small progress we make in the work of love, “* in that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord?”

Others are disposed to fall into a different error; when they see God's children subject to the misfortunes of life, like Asaph in the 73d Psalm, they seem offended at it. How, say they, can the Almighty expose his child to these trials, while such a person who is living without care of his immortal soul, is enjoying prosperity! “†I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”—“They are not in trouble like other men, neither are they plagued like other men.” Therefore his people say, “How doth God know, is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the ungodly that prosper in the world, they increase in riches.”—“Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.”—“*For all the day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning.” They are inclined to say to the suffering Christian with Job's

* Hebrews xii. 14. † Psalm lxxiii. 3, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

wife, ***“ Dost thou still retain thy integrity ? Curse God, and die.”**

Alas ! we know full as well as these false comforters that the path, trod by the children of God through the desert, is hard and thorny ; and that apparently overcome by the weight of his burden he often sighs for deliverance, that his life may be a continual succession of struggles and grievances. It often appears as if his cry could not reach to his God, through the thick atmosphere which limits his view, and excludes every ray of hope from his afflicted bosom. When we hear him say with a voice faint with mourning, **“ †As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God !”—“ My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God : when shall I come and appear before God ?”** When we hear this plaintive voice, it pierces to the very bottom of our hearts, and touches every chord of our sympathy and love.

But oh, poor sufferer ! have you no consolation in your affliction ? Are you totally unacquainted **“ ‡with the rod and who hath appointed it ?”** Are the ways of God hidden from you ? Do his promises say nothing to your soul ? Where is your faith ? Where is your hope ? Has God ceased to be *Love* ? Can you not see that he will save you as **“ §a brand plucked out of the fire ?”** that he desires your heart, and because you do not give it him undividedly, his power bursts the

* Job ii. 9. † Psalm xlii. 1, 2. ‡ Micah vi. 9. § Zech. iii. 2.

chains that enslaved that heart to which he has so many claims, and that the trials you lament so deeply are so many proofs of his divine love? Oh! may your faith pierce through the dark cloud that envelopes you, and with an eagle's eye you will then joyfully discern the Saviour who gave his life for you, and whose arms of infinite mercy are ever open to receive you.

See the example given us by the family of Bethany. How do Martha and Mary behave in their affliction? First, ~~the~~ doubt they attended their much loved sufferer with all the assiduity which their kind feelings would require. They did not, like some egotistical people, fly from a bed of sickness, or a house of mourning, and turn their backs on the unfortunate. We delight in picturing to ourselves Martha seeking with her wonted activity every possible means of mitigating her brother's sufferings, taking no rest day or night, till she had left nothing untried that could give him a moment's relief; but we delight still more in fancying Mary seated close to his pillow, watching attentively his very looks, proving in a thousand ways how tenderly she felt for him, seizing with the quickness of true affection, the right moment of saying some little word of consolation, which came directly from her heart and penetrated deeply into his. We delight in thus picturing this family to our imagination.

But to the Christian it would appear that as yet none but human means had been employed, and could

Martha and Mary rest satisfied with these? St. John does not even name their attentions to their brother, we could not doubt that the sisters, whom Jesus loved, would omit any act of kindness and charity, but he seems to take pleasure in telling us what follows:—
 “Therefore his sisters sent unto him saying, Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick.” His sisters sent unto him! What amazing confidence! Do you thus act, ye disciples of Christ? Do you not first make known your complaints to your relations, neighbours, and friends, without one word of communion with Jesus? Are you not seen running to and fro, anxiously looking for help, but totally forgetful of the source of all abundant grace, and “* of every good and perfect gift.” When you are weeping for sorrow, do you not forget him who said, “† I, even I, am he that comforteth you.” Do you not, when one you love is sick depend upon the skill and remedies of the Physician, or on your own cares, forgetting him who strikes the blow and heals it—in whose hands are life and death—who can send you down to the grave, and raise you up again, who is called the Prince of Life! Why are you therefore surprised when illness brings mourning into your families to feel yourself overwhelmed with hopeless sorrows and misery, which nothing seems to alleviate. Jesus is the only friend who could bring you peace, and you have forgotten him, you have not invited him. May it not be said

* James i. 17. † Isaiah li. 12.

of you as of the ancient people of God—" *My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." " †Oh! the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as ● stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? Yet thou, O Lord! art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not."

Far differently did the sisters of Lazarus act; they sent to Jesus and what do they ask of him? scarcely a prayer, they believed in the love that Jesus bore them, " †and the power given him in Heaven and on earth,"—they knew that the plaintive cry of sorrow never reached his merciful ear unheeded—they knew that he gives a helping hand to all that come unto him; their hearts were satisfied. Lord! behold he whom thou lovest is sick. O! what faith! what perfect trust! what an affecting appeal! O! my dear brethren, if you thus come to Jesus, feeling that he is your Saviour, and knowing that by faith in his word nothing can deprive you of his everlasting love, you will depend on him in your trials as did Martha andⁿ Mary; you will feel assured that " §He that spared not his own son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" At the idea of that eternal happiness which

* Jer. ii. 12. † Jer. xlv. 8 9. ‡ Matt. xxviii. 18. § Rom. viii. 32.

he has purchased for you, and offers you freely, you will feel ashamed to distrust his faithfulness and love. Therefore, in all your trials of body and mind, you only need this short and simple appeal, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." Lay open your heart before Jesus, make known to him your wants—this is all his mercy requires. Say to him, when you or those dear to you, are in sorrow, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is in the agonies of death; or he whom thou lovest is troubled by doubts; or he whom thou lovest is trembling at his weakness, at the coldness of his love, at his deadness in thy service, or at the sin which does so easily beset him; if you do not thus prove your love to your brethren, and at every fresh sorrow lead him to Jesus, as it were by the hand, be assured you do not love him at all, or that you love him amiss.

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

What a mysterious answer! We expected that as soon as he received the message sent him by Martha and Mary, that Jesus would have arose and said to his Disciples, as he did at a later period, "Let us go into Judea again"—Let us go to Bethany to the relief of Lazarus; but no: Jesus replied in words so difficult of comprehension, that Theologians, of all ages, have differed about their meaning—they were

also calculated to try the faith of the Sisters. What say they, this sickness is not unto death; but did not Lazarus die in this sickness? Can Jesus be mistaken? what can his meaning be?

Lazarus dies, and is buried. Is it then from the tomb that the Son of God is to receive glory and praise? The rest of the history will explain to us, as it did to Martha and Mary, all that now seems obscure; mean while I pray to receive instruction, and to learn to adore the dispensations of my God, even should they be veiled in mystery, “* For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Martha and Mary speak to Jesus only of the illness of their brother: Jesus answers them as the Prince of Life, having dominion over death and the grave; he speaks only of the glory of God, and the glory of the Son of God. What a lesson for us, my beloved brethren, in our limited and narrow views! We only see the present moment, Christ in his dispensations for us, looks to our eternal destiny. We see only the wants that assail us, the relief which we ask for with tears. Christ looks to everlasting life, and desires we should attain it by unknown paths. We see our mortal bodies, Christ our immortal souls. We see

* Isaiah lv. 8 9.

time, Christ eternity, and above all and in all the glory of God. Whoever we may be, whatever our rank in life, we only exist in common with the whole universe for one object, and for that all things have been and were created, "the glory of God, the glory of the Son of God."

Could we but rightly understand this important truth and possess our whole souls with it, we should soon lose that little miserable self-love which makes us set up ourselves as our own idols, and is the cause of all our misdeeds. We should soon feel that we ought to present ourselves and all belonging to us "a living and holy sacrifice to the glory of God, and to the glory of the Son of God." We should tread under foot our inordinate pride, that hideous monster, and give all glory to him who created and saved us. We should tear the last blossom from the crown which our presumption had usurped, and place it with perfect submission on the divine head of the Son of God ; in short, the eternal order of creation would be restored.

What signifies to us the method which God uses to obtain for us this sublime end? Lazarus is stretched upon a bed of sickness, and is thus ordained to manifest the glory of God. St. Paul and St. John are appointed to the same work by preaching the cross of Christ.—Lazarus died and was buried, and by that death and burial proclaimed the glory of the Son of God as

* Rom. xii. 1.

triumphantly as did the worlds of the vast universe when they poured forth in endless multitudes from his creating hand. O! let us learn to know God! Let us remember that the sole object of our existence is his glory, that by glorifying him we accomplish his sovereign will, which is ever good and perfect. Let us remember that we may accomplish that will as fully on a bed of straw, groaning with pains and trials, as if we were following the most brilliant career! Alas! we are so blind, and so often judge from outward appearances, that the words happiness and misfortune are totally misapplied by us. If an angel of God, endued with all knowledge, would look down from heaven into the obscure life of some person whom his fellow-creatures term unfortunate; he would perhaps seize his harp to sing praises for his happiness, and were that angel not in a kingdom where there are no more tears, he might weep bitterly at the misery of some other person whose lot is envied by all. Some obtain, through severe trials, the great end of their existence, the glory of God, while it is wholly forgotten by others who are nursed in the lap of prosperity. What an awful consideration! In the fulfilment of time all created beings must, before the assembled universe, proclaim the glory of God, either by sounding the hymn of everlasting praise with the pure spirits of heaven, or by bearing a desponding testimony of God's justice in chastisement with the condemned. Oh God! may I hasten while it is yet time to lay my rebellious will at thy feet—may the

affections of my heart as well as the actions of my life repeat before the heavenly host; Glory be to thee! May the last accents of my dying lips bear to the foot of thy throne of Mercy, this cry of praise and love, Glory be to thee, Oh God!

LECTURE III.

LOVE FOR JESUS.—A TRIAL OF FAITH.

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus—When he had heard, therefore, that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.—*St. John, xi. 5, 6.*

“Lord! behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.”—Such was the affecting appeal of Martha and Mary when their brother was attacked with a grievous illness. “This sickness is not unto death,” replied Jesus, “but for the glory of God that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” This answer gave the sisters much hope and expectation; the Evangelist takes us first beyond Jordan, where we shall listen to Jesus and his Disciples, then back to Bethany to the tomb of Lazarus.

St. John continues his narrative by shewing us that “his Lord abode two days still in the same place where he was,” although he had heard of the illness of him he called ‘his friend;’” this was contrary to all expectations, as he was ever ready to relieve the afflicted. But the beloved disciple knew that the natural bent of our hearts is to judge, with precipitation and temerity,

the ways of the Lord—he knew how prone we are to doubt his love, though he gives us such abundant proofs of it; he knew how easily we think ourselves forgotten, rejected, and abandoned; he knew how weak is our trust if our wishes are not immediately complied with—he knew all our ingratitude, therefore before even he acquaints us that Jesus “remained two days in the place where he was,” before he tells us of the mysterious conduct of our Lord, which might be discouraging to persons naturally incredulous, his pious feelings urged him to justify the love of his master by seeking to prevent the possibility of a rash judgment. Wishing us to read the very heart of Jesus, and to see its kind and generous affection, he tells us, “Jesus loved Martha and Mary, and Lazarus.” What delicacy and feeling? What a deep knowledge of our passions and of our infirmities does this Disciple possess! Before he shews us his master’s actions he wishes us to understand his motives. We should seek to know the thoughts of Jesus as he knew them; we are persuaded that this knowledge would give us a thousand inducements for loving him and his dispensations, however mysterious, and however gloomy they may appear at first-sight. After being told that Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, dare any one accuse him of negligence towards that afflicted family, even though he delayed for two days giving them the assistance of his almighty power?

Dear brother in the Lord! are you in trouble? Though you have not St. John at your side whispering

to you that Jesus loves you, yet will you doubt that love, if in the inscrutable wisdom of his providence, he should not at once grant your petitions? No, you will remember that his love is for ever the same, and equally manifested in trials as in prosperity—you will be filled with hope and expectation. Why do we not apply the same to our Christian friends on earth?—We cannot frequently understand their conduct—it appears as if they neglected us, as if they did not return our affection—as if they did not sympathise in our misfortunes, as if—but, oh! let us beware of doubting them; we may bitterly repent it; let us offer our hearts to them with confidence, which is the foundation of all friendship, and let us feel assured of their love, and be patient. “Jesus loved Martha and Mary, and Lazarus.” To be loved by Jesus is the climax of all happiness; all that the world calls happiness fades away before it. I have seen an ambitious fool leaping for joy, on finding himself noticed by some great man whose favor he had been courting; every thing bore a new aspect to him, a new sun appeared to arise, to illuminate with brighter days the remainder of his life. Alas! caprice in him on whom he had placed these delusive hopes, plunged him into hopeless darkness—in one moment his joy vanished, and his bosom filled with despair.

Another equally unwise, places his happiness on some loved object, of whom he has made an idol, he finds his love is returned—his dreams of bliss seem

realised—his heart bursting with joy : Jacob did not with greater impatience await the end of the fourteen years that he had served for Rachel. Alas ! the inconstancy of the human heart, or the instability of life may destroy this idol, crush his hopes, and distract him with grief. A tomb watered by his tears may be all that is left of his dreams of joy. Is not this the history of your own heart, and is it not daily seen in the most exalted walks of life as well as in the dwelling of the artist, or the cottage of the peasant ?

Oh ! my Saviour ! how different is the lot of those whom thou lovest ! “ *thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever” —thou hast the power of blessing those whom thou lovest, and filling them with joy and peace—thy love is in itself salvation—thou givest to thy beloved flock, not merely some fleeting moments of earthly happiness, but an eternity of joy which eye cannot see, or heart conceive. But O ! what a blessed family ! Martha, Mary and Lazarus, what need you care for trials, illness or death ? You are beloved by Jesus !

Poor blind mortals that we are, we often love what we hardly know. We cannot look into the heart, we only look on the outward appearance. We often trust some one who proves unworthy of our trust—our hopes are disappointed—our expectations blasted. Sometimes

* Heb. xiii. 8.

we also receive praise from those who love us, when a secret sense of our unworthiness whispers within us, alas ! did they but know us better ?— But Jesus who loved Martha and Mary is “ * he who searcheth the reins and hearts.” What a testimony in their favor ! What a privilege to be beloved by him who can penetrate into the secret recesses of our hearts, and knows all our thoughts and feelings. It was evident that Lazarus and his sisters were willing and ready to receive him. I must not say they deserved his love, for among all the descendants of Adam of whom can that be said—but they sought communion with him, loved his word, and coveted his favor.

No doubt, my dear brethren, you envy this happy family, and no doubt there is not one among you who does not desire to be loved by Jesus, and called his friend. Be assured this happiness is not denied you ; in one sense it may be said that you are already the objects of his love. Was it not love that prompted him to quit the mansions of peace and glory, in order to partake of our sorrows and deliver us from them ? Was it not love that perfected the great work of the Redemption ? the glad tidings of which have been proclaimed to all ! Is it not his love which assembled us here, that we might in his name invite you to believe in him, and to partake of the everlasting blessings of which his love is the source ? But, say

* Rev. ii. 23.

you, this does not satisfy us; we know that “ * God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” But Jesus loved this family in a peculiar manner—he calls Lazarus “ his friend :” St. John mentions as if it were a blessed privilege, “ Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus :” they were the friends of his heart—their names are recorded in the book of life, an eternal monument of his love. All true, my dear brethren, but I repeat such happiness is within your reach—Jesus is as willing to bestow his love now, as he was eighteen hundred years ago. What had Lazarus and his sisters done to be called the friends of Jesus ? We have already told you, by his grace their hearts were open to receive him—they sought communion with him, and listened to his word. This is all he asked of them, it is all he asks of you. Their actions were not distinguished, nor did they attach any merit to their lives ; they had not, like St. Paul, published the Gospel throughout the world, or like St. John been banished in its cause—they had not, like Stephen, died a martyr, to bear testimony to the truth ; they had not been called to do any thing of that kind, and yet Jesus loved them. Martha, by faith, confessed Jesus—“ I believe, Lord, thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.” Mary sat at his feet and listened unto his word. Lazarus glorified him by his resignation on a bed of suffering. So, my dear brother,

* John iii. 16.

if you would wish to find some proof that Jesus loves you, do not seek great and exalted things in your heart or life—come to Jesus—ask him for his love—humble yourself before him—probe the very depth of your heart; his holy spirit will speak to you of peace, reconciliation and love. Do not feel dismayed if the smallness of your means prevents you from serving him by great and brilliant actions—do not despair if you are kept so low by weakness and infirmities, that it seems scarcely possible that Jesus could condescend to love you—remember his love is a free gift: no one deserves it; he gives it gratuitously. If you wish to feel the assurance of it, ask yourself these questions: Have I received the word of Jesus in my heart? Do his promises speak to my soul? Is it well for me that there is a Saviour? Have I found in him pardon and peace? Does my soul so need his presence that neither men nor angels could supply his place? Would it be a happiness to me to sit at his feet like Mary, and hear him speak of his heavenly kingdom? Does my soul thirst after the mighty and living God? Do I feel a continual want of approaching him as a child who finds fresh delight in springing into the arms of its affectionate father? In all my trials, pains, and troubles, is it to him I cry for deliverance? and am I permitted to recognise his paternal hand? Am I resigned? And do I bow my head in silent adoration, when his hand has fallen heavily on me? Do I seek comfort from his words, or rather from the things of this world? What is it that casts a

shade of calmness over the most sad hours of my life ? Am I convinced that the difficult and painful path in which he leads me is the best for my eternal welfare ? and that all things “ *work together for good to them that love God ?” If you have even an anxious desire to answer these questions satisfactorily, you may say to yourself, “ Jesus loves me, and I rejoice in his love.”

But beware ! if you seek your happiness from the pleasures of this world, you can never enjoy the sweet privileges of the family at Bethany. “ † Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss that ye may consume it upon your lust. Ye adulterers and adulteresses know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” “ † If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him.” You all wish that it might be said that Jesus loved you, though your affections cling to the world that crucified him ; the thought of Jesus is the last that presents itself to your mind—his name is neither in your heart nor on your lips, nor in your dwellings. Would you thus treat a human being for whom you had the least regard ? First deny yourselves—renounce the vanities that captivate you, and then you may return to the love of God, and taste the happiness of being loved by Christ, with the family of Bethany. If you really enjoy this love all is right—eternally right—even were

* Rom. viii. 28. † James iv. 3, 4. ‡ 1 John ii. 15.

you oppressed by worldly cares. Without that love all is wrong—eternally wrong—were you laden with all that man in his folly calls happiness. “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.” This expression of St. John must banish from our minds all doubts, mistrust, and murmurs against the mysterious conduct of Jesus, “who abode still two days in the place where he was,” after having heard that Lazarus was ill. Why this delay? Why did not Jesus, according to his usual custom, hasten to the relief of a beloved and afflicted family? Why does he not say one word in his omnipotence, and Lazarus would be well? What! did Jesus love Lazarus, and did he leave him languishing in illness? His disorder made fearful progress—he felt the sources of life dried up in his bosom—his sisters bathed in tears, watched his glazed eye, dimmed by the approach of death. All present wept bitterly at the prospect of this sad separation; yet Jesus, their heavenly friend, ever alive to human sorrows, is still absent. Two whole days passed, Lazarus died, and Jesus was not there. Can it be then true that he loves Martha and her sister, and Lazarus?

Thus man reasons; he cannot understand the ways of the Eternal: he only sees sorrow where sorrow is, and pain where pain is. He values his deliverance from them according to the promptitude with which it is effected; but Jesus, who in all things seeks the

glory of God, and the salvation of man, does not spare his Disciples this timid dread of suffering. He desires that they should learn to love his will more than their own well-being ; and recognise his love as clearly when suffering under his most severe dispensations, as when he is rejoicing at being delivered from them. Let me appeal to your experience ; have your trials taught you this great truth ? When you were exposed to the fiery ordeal of affliction, what was the first prayer that escaped from your heart ? What did you feel when the Lord did not grant your prayer ? When he permitted your anguish to increase ? When he sent you long nights of painful wakefulness, or called you to the bed side of a suffering and beloved friend ? Tell us, that we may profit by your experience, did you not think that the Lord turned a deaf ear to your supplications ? Did you never doubt the efficacy of prayer ? Did not the promises of God appear to you to be without power ? Have you not at last been forced to confess that the reason of all this was, that you had not humbled yourself properly under the hand of God ? That you had not bowed submissively to his will ? That you merely sought a riddance from the troubles that assailed you, and after crying, “ * O ! my father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me ” — you had not courage to add, “ nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt.”

• Matt. xxvi. 39.

“* O ! fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken!” When will you learn that the ways of the Almighty are not your ways, neither his thoughts are your thoughts? When will you be taught by his grace to govern the impetuous emotions of a wayward spirit—to silence the insinuations of an incredulous heart, and subdue your perverse will. Are we always to be controlled by the interest of the moment without looking above to those plans which a merciful God has laid down for us? “† Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee.” When the nature of a plant is to take deep root, grow large, and bring forth fruits to perfection, even winds and storms contribute to its growth: but the plant of a day flourishes by gentle means: it blossoms with the dawn—displays for a short time its delicate freshness—and budding beauty, ornaments a bright spring morning, perfuming it with delicious fragrance—but, alas! the first gleam of sun destroys its freshness, the first breath of wind fades its beauty, it withers, drops its leaves—“‡ and the place is not known where it was.” But the tree that in time will enrich him who planted it, rises slowly and with difficulty from the ground, which it will one day shelter with its branches—it requires years to strike its deep roots, and spread its luxuriant shade—storms seem to harden it—it rises to a magnificent height, and gratifies the hopes of the traveller, who seeks repose

* Luke xxiv. 25. † Job xii. 8. ‡ Nahum iii. 17.

under its foliage, and refreshment from its fruits. It is the same in works of grace as of nature. Man must be prepared by warfare and trials, “* to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life—to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.” It is a sort of education which God gave those children, whom he set apart as a light and an instruction to future ages—he made them pass through the dark paths of adversity—he placed them in a crucible that their faith might be purified from the dross of pride and sin. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was led from trial to trial, from strife to strife—he travelled an unknown road, as strange to him as the mountain of Moriah, where he was ordered to sacrifice the dearest object of his love: he is to hope against all semblance of hope. Again, it sometimes appears as if the Lord smoothed the paths of those who were less favored by his love. A Centurion, of Capernaum, who might have known nothing of a God whom the Heathens rejected, entreated Jesus to cure a favorite servant: he answered, “† I will come and heal him, and the servant was healed in the self-same hour.” Two blind men, sitting by the way side, heard Jesus passing by, all Israel was resounding with his good deeds, they cried to him vehemently for mercy—he stood still, spake one word, the blind received their sight. A woman of Canaan, a heroine of faith, whose daughter was at the point of death,

* Psalm xxvii. 4. † St. Matt. viii. 7, 13.

came to Jesus, implored his assistance with tears, she received a cold answer, a refusal to her prayer, but by this means shewed all Israel, and all succeeding generations, a striking example of victorious faith.—The great apostle Paul prayed thrice to be delivered from a thorn in the flesh—he was answered in these words, * “ My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in thy weakness.” Thus the Lord guides his children ; he may appear deaf to their prayers—storms may thicken round them, their night becomes darker and darker ; but it will serve to render their day of consolation more bright. Often, when that weary heart has ceased to send up prayers, that seem unanswered, when bitter anguish has extinguished the last ray of hope, and all human aid has failed, then Jesus visits his child, and turns his darkness into light, his weeping into songs of praise.—Lazarus was struck by the cold hand of death and laid in the sepulchre, when his sisters weeping bitterly, and clad in mourning robes, had no other consolation than to lament over his remains, then Jesus, with sovereign power over death and the grave, appears in Bethany, and draws glory to God from out of the very tomb. O ! the wisdom, power, and love of God ! When shall we learn to know, and adore thee, and submit silently to all that thou doest for our eternal good !

Some Divines, of the present day, ignorant of God's intentions, and that he desires the sanctification

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

of his children before all things, have imagined a thousand hypothesis to explain the reason why our Lord left "his friend" two days in suffering. One says, he was detained by an indispensable engagement, another that he did not know Lazarus was in danger—Oh! ye fools, will ye always lose sight of the glory of God, and the salvation of man? Will ye always think of this carnal world instead of the eternal happiness of those immortal souls whom Jesus is preparing for Heaven? We must raise our eyes above, if we wish to compass the intentions of God towards us. "He desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live;" he liketh not that his children, his already by conversion, should be enslaved by the servile chains and corruptions of this world; he bursts the bonds for them, and should the blow cut deep into our hearts, shall we not acknowledge the rod, and the hand that uses it? O God! what will thou that I do? What sacrifice have I to make, what idol to offer up? Since thou has loved me, and since thou hast saved me, by what path wilt thou lead me to Zion, to the assembly of thy first born, in the midst of the blessed spirits who adore and worship thee, and where nothing polluted by sin could be suffered to enter?

LECTURE IV.

THE HEROIC CONDUCT OF JESUS.—THE TWELVE HOURS.

Then after that saith he to his Disciples, let us go into Judea again. His Disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.—*St. John*, xi. 7, 8, 9, 10.

The two virtues which in our opinion constitute heroism are courage and devotion; the names that we see recorded with pompous eulogiums, are those of men who, forgetting themselves and their personal interests, devoted themselves to sufferings or death, either for the good of their country, the welfare of some one dear to them, or for some other cause equally praise-worthy. We admire their courage and devotion—we love to study the magnanimous traits of their character, but as a great writer of our time has observed, “* There is no heroism which, when closely examined, has not its defects, great and pure as it may appear.” What would this author say, if the heroism of man could be seen by the light of the truth of God? What would he say could he analyse, by the lamp of the divine word, all the sparks of pride, vanity, and self-love, which elicit the sublime flashes of the heroism so extolled by man. How then would appear the most brilliant actions of many, whose names resound from century to century, and whose memory appears surrounded by an egis of glory—O! what would be those brilliant actions if weighed

* Victor Cousins.

in the balance of eternal justice! Should we not see the mysterious hand which surprised the King of Babylon in the midst of his vanities, as it wrote the fatal "Tekel" of the prophet, " *Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting"—thou knowest it, O God! and it is not for us to judge.

Let us, my dear brethren, bless God for having taught us another kind of courage and devotion, which is recorded not by mortals (who often call good evil and evil good) but by the angels on their golden harps of eternal praise.

We see in the Redeemer of the world, as well as in the sacrifice he made in leaving heaven for our sakes, as throughout his whole life, and particularly in the passage before us, we see in him the most perfect model of heroic devotion, and one that was approved by God; and he says to us all, " † I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you."

Come then, ye disciples of Christ, and ye also men of the world, who know how to appreciate what is great and noble. Come let us study our model; do not let us confine ourselves to a vain and barren admiration, but let us with a courageous step begin the course which our heavenly master has run before us. The considerations which the sublime conduct of Jesus should inspire us with, are what we should learn from our text.

* Daniel v. 27. † John xiii. 15.

O Lord ! destroy in us that cowardly apathy which renders us lukewarm to all that ought to inspire us with enthusiasm. Root out of us that selfishness which chills us and keeps us from rising to the contemplation of that divine example which thou hast placed before the eyes of a sinning world, and fitted for the admiration of the heavenly hosts, forming the subject of our songs to all eternity.

Jesus was beyond Jordan where he had been obliged to fly on account of the hatred and persecutions of the Chiefs of the people : he abode there two days after Martha and Mary had made known to him their uneasiness. They were two days of suffering to Lazarus, two days of painful suspense to his sisters; yet, no doubt, they were passed in works of charity by him who “ * went about doing good,” “ † and whose meat was to do the will of him who sent him and to finish his work.” Yes, at the same time that illness and death caused tears and sorrow in the house of Lazarus—the kind hand of the Lord took comfort and peace to other trembling hearts, filling them with pardon and thankfulness. But should those whom Jesus most loved be sometimes the last to whom he lends his aid, they are not therefore forgotten by him. No, his power succours them ; he “ ‡ keeps him as the apple of his eye : as an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings.” Jesus was

* Acts x. 38. † John iv. 34. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 10, 11.

beyond the Jordan, banished by the persecutions of those he came to save. But from thence he saw all that passed at Bethany—he counted the sighs of Lazarus, and the tears of his sisters—he saw him whom he loved sink into his grave—he saw that the trial was severe, perhaps too severe for their faith—he desired not that they should be “ * tempted above that they are able to bear.” His compassionate heart urged him to go to their relief, and he says to his disciples, “ Let us go into Judea again.” Dearly beloved, if God sends you affliction in order to bring you to him, and render you meet for salvation—if when you offer him up your prayers it seems as if they were not heard—if he made you wait two days, two weeks, or even two years, let not your heart fail you, but learn to understand the ways of his grace ; learn to believe and to hope, and ere long he will pronounce this word of mercy : “ Let us go into Judea,” let us return to that house of mourning, to that oppressed spirit which is ready to sink under this trial, that heart which is broken by pain and sorrow.

Now, I hear you raise an objection, which brings us more immediately to the subject of this day’s discourse ; scarcely had Jesus spoken these words, “ let us go into Judea again,”—when a cry is raised, “ Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again ?” It was his Disciples who spoke—they recollected, in trembling, that at the last

* 1 Cor. x. 13.

feast the Jews had taken up stones to stone their master—the fear they felt for him and for themselves was their motive for thus speaking; they lost sight of other things, they forgot the family of Bethany in their affliction; they forgot, or they had never understood the true object of their master's mission, which was to die for the salvation of his people. Fear and self-preservation prompted them to say, “Master, goest thou thither again?”

Alas! we must not blame them, they only felt what we probably should feel in their case—there is within us a fund of cowardice, and selfishness, which makes all things vanish before our own interests, and causes us to shudder at sacrifices and pain. So the Disciples trembled at the recollection of the stones which the Jews had taken up to stone their master. A voice speaks within us, the echo of what the Disciples felt, and says—What! will you return to do this good work, which will expose you to such hardships? At the risk of your own safety will you fulfil thus rigorously the will of God? Will you follow Jesus, though you must sacrifice your inclinations, pleasures, perhaps the idol of your heart, the world, and even yourself? Will you take up your cross daily in order to walk in that strait and thorny path?

Such are the cowardly insinuations of our carnal and unbelieving hearts. Will Jesus listen to the voice of his disciples? Will he not go into Judea? Ah! if

Jesus had shrunk from the prospect of pain or death, he would not have quitted the regions of glory, to descend into this abyss of misery. Had not his prophetic eye beheld Mount Golgothe from afar? It was not only returning to Bethany, to accomplish for his friends a work of power and love, to raise Lazarus from the grave, and restoring him to his affectionate sisters banish grief from their hearts and fill them with gratitude and joy, but in so doing he had before him a far more noble and exalted object, and also a trial infinitely sad and awful. The week of suffering was at hand, the last Passover drew near—the victim of atonement, slain before the foundation of the world, the hope and expectation of ages, approached his great sacrifice. He saw before him a sinful world, that he wished to save—a fallen race, that he desired to restore to their original destination. He saw eternal justice ready to strike the guilty: he wished to satisfy its claims—he saw a curse ready to fall on the wicked: he wished to take it on his own guiltless head. He saw everlasting burnings: he wished to quench their flames. He saw eternal happiness: he wished to gain it for us. He saw in God infinite love: he wished us to be blessed with its possession. This is the end that Jesus contemplated at the close of his career; his ardent love made him impatient for its fulfilment, though he knew it could only be attained by ignominy and suffering. When he said, “Let us go into Judca again”—he knew that he was advancing to his death. He had already predicted to his Disciples all that

should befall him—they had a fearful foresight of the future. Jesus did not wish to sadden and discourage them too much by further explanations. With calm resolution he boldly faces his object, the redemption of a sinful world. He foresaw the most cruel upbraidings and tortures, ending in an ignominious death—he foresaw a conflict which could not cease until he had yielded up his last breath in agony, and until the last drop of his blood was shed—he saw near him the Disciple whom he knew would betray him; he saw at a distance an infuriated mob whom he still wished to save; he heard their bitter cries, “Crucify him, Crucify him;” he saw the Calvary he was soon to ascend, laden with the instrument of his punishment and of our salvation—he saw the shameful flight of all whom he had loved; he saw the gloomy hours of his lingering agony—he saw death and the grave. He could have delayed this bitter cup; he might go into Galilee or Samaria, either was ready to receive him, and shelter him from the fury of his enemies—but no, with the courage of a hero marching to victory, he said, “Let us go into Judea again;” and he returned there. When I reflect that the object of Jesus was to save a guilty race, the very people who were putting him to death, and that his generous heart, filled with a love (incomprehensible to us) is eager to finish the work of their salvation; then, I throw myself at the feet of this Redeemer, and say, this is true courage and devotion—this is a heroism before which all the heroism of man fades to nothing—seems

contemptible and mean, and is lost in the impurity of this corrupt world.

O ! ye immortal souls ! ye sinners called to glory ! If we call ourselves the disciples of Christ, shall we not try to tread in the paths of our Chief? Shall we for ever find on our lips the miserable excuses of the Disciples? Will not the example of so much love rouse us from our cold self-love, and indifferent torpor? Why should we shrink from trials through which a Saviour God has passed before us? Why, when the Almighty hath spoken to us, should we waver at the sight of a painful sacrifice? Let us remember, that he who bought us with a price, and to whom we belong, requires an undivided heart; and that if we love father or mother, or brother or sister, more than him, we are not worthy of him.—His supreme will should find our hearts filled with submission, and ready to cry, “ * It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.” We must likewise remember that we are not to pass through our ordeal alone—he who went before us does not leave us to our own strength, or rather to our own weakness, but he will guide and support us, and ensure us the victory. A steady confidence in his power and love should be like a fast anchor to our souls, then, whatever storms and winds may arise, we may be shaken, but never destroyed.

But should the heroic example of our master appear too much above us; should his sublime standard dis-

* 1 Sam. iii. 18.

courage us from the hope of reaching the sacred height, let us listen to the answer Jesus made his Disciples, and throwing ourselves entirely on his mercy, may we receive instruction from it. "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of the world. But if a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." Two most important and encouraging lessons spring from these words—there are twelve hours in the day allowed by God to accomplish the work he has given us, after which the " * night cometh when no man can work," and if a man walk in the night he stumbleth because there is no light in him. This is the principal lesson to be derived from these encouraging words. Why then have we such a cowardly dread of suffering that our energies appear paralysed, and that we are incapacitated from acting with fortitude and bravery? The truth is, that in passing thro' life we lose sight of its end and object, and thinking only of ourselves, and the interest of the moment, we forget that we have to work an important work, the consequences of which, be they good or be they evil, will endure to all eternity. "Twelve hours in the day," then " † The Angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to Heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea

* John ix. 4. † Rev. x. 5, 6.

and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer. "Twelve hours of the day," then " * He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Then a voice will sound from the highest heavens unto the earth, even to the bottomless pit, and will take all creation by surprise, "as pains come upon a woman in travail." "† Give an account of thy stewardship."

O ! the folly of so many immortal souls, charged with a fearful responsibility, yet wasting in the pursuit of vanity, those few short and precious hours. The heathen King, who listened every morning to his slave crying out loudly, "Philip, remember that thou art mortal," may in the last day rise up in judgment against many who bear the name of Christian, yet go down to their grave without thought of death, judgment, or eternity : forgetting their high destination, they seek during the twelve hours of the day for fleeting and delusive shadows. Some fanciful dream distracts them during the twelve hours in which they should work ; and should they awaken from it on their death bed, on the very verge of the precipice, then " ‡ there should be time no longer." How bitter must be the recollection of the vigorous hours of youth and maturity that have been lost, irrevocably lost, in " § sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind." Does the hand which points the dial-plate of our existence, move so slowly, that we try to hasten its

* Heb. x. 37. † Luke xvi. 2. ‡ Rev. x. 6. § Hosea viii. 7.

course by giddiness and folly? Is the object of our life so trifling, that wholly unmindful of it we indulge our deceitful passions, and extinguish, by worldly sensualities, the gleams of day-light so kindly given us? How deplorable is the fate of the thoughtless trifler who never stops to ask himself—To what purpose was I born? Soon, like the wandering traveller, surprised at finding himself on the shore of the boundless ocean, he reaches the brink of eternity: leaving the light of day, he had walked without remorse in the dark paths of perdition; and, oh! into what an abyss of darkness and despair has he not fallen?

O God! “* so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom”—So prayed Moses in the desert, and so will all pray who remember that they are journeying towards Canaan—that time is short, the sun is nearly set, the night is at hand, eternity approaches, the grave is ready to receive us. The lesson which Jesus taught his Disciples, of life, death, judgment, and eternity, should sound in their ears like a voice of thunder, and stimulate them to hurry on in the steps of their beloved Master.

And is there no happiness in following him who united example so well to precept? his career on earth was short—in the prime of life—“† He was cut out of the land of the living: for the transgression of his people was he stricken.” It is not by the number of

† Psalm xc. 12. * Isaiah lili. 8.

our years, but by the manner in which we have passed them that we should reckon the length of our life; the longest life is as nothing if we do not obtain the end of our being—if we do, one hour is worth an eternity. How long then must he have lived who went about doing good from place to place, and verifying this saying, “* My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work.” His father’s glory was his constant object; the salvation of man was the means he took to accomplish it: his days were passed in teaching the ignorant, comforting the afflicted, healing the sick, doing good to all—his nights in solitary prayer for those to whom he had consecrated his life. The dawn of day found him in the temple giving light to those who “† sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.” At the close of a weary day he was still found giving ear to the distressed, and alleviating their troubles. If the thousands of sufferers relieved by him could tell us of his mercies, how would it shame us for our distrust.—Was he ever known to cast out any one who came to him? Never! never! A continued succession of kind actions, the fruits of his pure and tender love, would be unveiled to us, from the time when a voice from heaven announced him to the earth, saying, “‡ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him,” till the hour when his dying voice pronounced with triumphant love these words to the whole world—words which were repeated in Heaven by celestial hosts. “§ It is finished.”

* St. John iv. 34. † Luke i. 79. ‡ St. Matt. iii. 17. § St. John xix. 30.

My dear brethren after having contemplated for a moment the life of our Saviour, if we venture to look at our own, what do we find? Folly, trifling and sin: hours wasted, days misemployed, charities neglected. How often have I put off till to-morrow the works I should have done to-day? How many are still in darkness which I might have enlightened? How many mourners whom I never comforted? How many poor with whom I never shared my bread? O God! will all this arise against me in the day of judgment? Is it for such a life thou hast entrusted to me "twelve hours of the day" and hast ransomed me with thy blood. " * Enter not into judgement with thy servant O Lord! for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

However, Christ teaches us another lesson in our text, " If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of the world, but if any man walk in the night he stumbleth because there is no light in him." Words that not only imply that we ought to employ faithfully the twelve hours of the day in order to the fulfilling of our task, for " † the night comes when no man can work," but here Jesus spiritualises the figure he makes us of and wishes us to learn that we must accomplish that task by the light of his word and will. The end of the verse: " If any man walk in the night he stumbleth because there is no light in him " leaves no doubt of the meaning of these

* Psalm cxlvi. 2. † St. John ix. 4.

words : Jesus Christ is “* the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.” All that is not in him—all that is in the world or in ourselves is darkness and sin. Alas ! what would have become of us, “if † the day had not dawned and the day-star had not arisen in our hearts.” Shall we be at all the happier because our generation is called the age of light ? No, all that philosophy can offer us (be it even the most spiritual) would be to our souls without the brilliant light of the Gospel, like those false lights of the sandy desert which allure travellers to their destruction. All human systems are silent, when I ask what must I do to be saved ? When I turn to the most enlightened of my fellow travellers and ask them where are we ? Where are we going to ? Which road should we take ? They look at each other amazed, but no hand can point the way that we should go ; their lamps cannot throw light upon the grave, and beyond it all is utter darkness. I was still wandering in the wilderness when a voice was heard, it was heard in Judea, it has out-lived centuries—it has come to me—“ † I am the way, the truth and the life, no one cometh unto the father but by me.” Happy the man who has walked in this way ! happy the man who has walked by this light ! In vain may dark clouds obscure the rays of the sun of righteousness, they will soon disperse, the heavens will again become serene, and this child of light “stumbleth not because he seeth the light of the world.”

* St. John viii. 12. † 2 Peter i. 19. † St John xiv. 6.

Any one who has experience of a christian's life knows the intense anxiety he feels when he is doubtful of the path which God desires he should take ; several may be open to him, and his mind distracted by doubts, anxious to fulfil his task he throws himself on his knees before him who is the light itself. " Lord what dost thou require of me? What must I do? And if a ray of divine light should teach him the way he ought to choose, what courage and energy will he not draw from the assurance that he is doing the will of God? He then will follow in the steps of his master and who can arrest his progress or abate his courage? Could any one restrain Jesus from going into Judea? It is the assurance of doing the will of God which sends Martyrs to the stake or to the scaffold, and while that dwells within us, it will teach us to overcome all difficulties.

But if you persist in walking in darkness and trusting to your own wisdom, what will all your courage or your efforts avail? Why do so many prefer darkness to light? Why do men in their madness plunge deeper and deeper into darkness, notwithstanding that succeeding rays of light might beam upon their consciences? However deplorable their folly may be, we must not be surprised at it, the Lord himself explained to us, the mystery of perdition—" their deeds were evil"—they fly from truth as their greatest enemy, but can they always fly from it? No, when the twelve hours of the day have been passed

unprofitably—when the light of the world has sunk beneath the horizon, and the dark valley of the shadow of death appears in sight, what can guide the wavering steps of the wretched man who has fled from the light? When he feels his last hour approaching, and that he is undeceived (though too late) what voice will speak to him of pardon and peace? This is the darkness which the Bible calls “* outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Unfortunate man! if there should be still one breath of life in you—if you can send one sigh to the bosom of your God, be quick, raise your dying voice to Jesus, like the thief on the cross, “† Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” A helping hand may be held out to you at the last moment, and a ray of heavenly light may kindle a spark of hope in your troubled spirit. We, who are immortal and responsible creatures, for whom the twelfth hour has not struck, let us go forward, strong in the strength of the Lord; our eye steadily fixed on “‡ the author and finisher of our faith,” “§ laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race which is set before us.” Besides the benefit of our Lord’s example, let us cherish in our hearts the two great lessons in our text, given to the Disciples and to us. The importance of life, which he calls the twelve hours of the day, and the necessity that we should accomplish our task by the light of God’s will. We shall see the strength of

* St. Matt. vii. 19. † St. Luke xxiii. 42. ‡ Hebrews xii. 2. § Hebrews xii. 1.

God perfected in our weakness—we shall determine “* to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth”—a love quite new to us will awaken a powerful stimulus in our minds, and we shall at last see that gracious promise of God fulfilled in us—“† I will make him ride on the high places of the earth.”—“‡ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away ”

LECTURE V.

OUR FRIEND LAZARUS SLEEPETH.

These things said he : And after that he saith unto them, our friend Lazarus sleepeth ; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.—*St. John xi. 11.*

Jesus did not come down from Heaven to teach the world a system of morality or philosophy. Man needed a far more different lesson. As a transgressor of Gods holy laws, he is not only the object of his indignation and wrath, but he is become the wretched slave of sin and corruption ; and sin produces bitter fruits, both in this life as well as in eternity. As eternal misery is to be the last state of his soul so his body is assigned as its last home to the sad and dⁱsolate mansion of death. Yes, of death, that bottomless pit, that vexation to all philosophy, called by an inspired

* Rev. xiv. 4.

† Deut. xxxii. 13.

‡ Isaiah xxxv. 10.

author * “the king of terrors” which seizes on the mortal part of a sinful being, and tells him that his immortal part must appear before the tribunal of an upright judge.

Now the Doctrine of Jesus which he has named “glad tidings” is sent not only to pronounce absolution to those whom it addresses—not only to annul the sentence of punishment due to a violated law, but to soften and disarm of their terrors the most terrible and bitter consequences of sin.

The Gospel by proclaiming pardon to the guilty, breaks, by its power, the chains of their slavery, and deprives death of its sting, the tomb of its darkness, the grave of its victory. Thus the deliverer guides those whom he has liberated to the sublime regions of liberty, from whence he governs victoriously that scene of desolation and ruin, which sin hath laid waste with its frightful ravages, and where even one of the redeemed said not long since “† O ! wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?” From those sublime heights the redeemed of Christ are chaunting with triumph as also with humility this song of victory, “‡ we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” It is thus Jesus desires that we should look upon life and death ; in acquainting his Disciples that he whom he calls his friend has ceased to exist, he does not speak to them of dissolution or terrors, though his friend had actually descended

* Job xviii. 14. † Rom. vii. 24. ‡ Rom. viii. 37.

into the tomb ; no, he spoke as of a rest after labour, a sleep after weariness. " Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."— O Jesus ! Prince of life ! sovereign disposer of all ! come while we are considering these words of eternal life—come and speak peace and victory to our souls ; raise us above the world, above our worldly cares ; above death, and the grave—fit us to follow thee to those heavenly regions on which our hopes are placed ; break asunder the chains which bind us to earth, and let us fully enjoy the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Jesus had, with a grave reproof, met the difficulty which his Disciples raised against his return to Judea ; he might have said at once, Lazarus is dead, and I am going to comfort his sisters ; but, no, he wished to announce the melancholy news in a form best calculated to soften its bitterness : " Our friend Lazarus sleepeth ;" then, as if he thought he had pained his Disciples too much (for they also loved Lazarus) he added, " but I go that I may awake him out of sleep : " Jesus knew before he heard from Bethany, all that had passed there ; he could see the cause of the illness of Lazarus, as well when at a distance as when near, and by speaking one word " * in the power that was given him in heaven and on earth," could either cure him or restore him to life after death ; but we must not forget this sickness was

* Matt. xxviii. 18.

to be "for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby:" Jesus was glad, for his Disciples sake, that he was not there; he returns to Judea, and there, at the edge of the grave, all Israel and all future generations may see with admiration the power of the Redeemer of the world.—Happy are the Disciples of such a master—happy are those who witnessed his power, and more happy still are those who know, by their own experience, that great as was that power, it does not exceed his love!

But who, feeling this, could duly appreciate the happiness of the man whom Jesus called "his friend." He "† who laid the foundation of the earth," "‡ upholding all things by the power of his word," the Lord of glory, he gives the endearing name of friend to a worm of the earth, a sinner. Men of exalted station, (though only dust and ashes) will not deign sometimes to give this name to a fellow-creature in humble life, yet he whom the Angels of God worship, so called Lazarus, and how precious, how encouraging, is this name in the heart and from the lips of the Redeemer of the world! We know well what is understood by the word friend as applied by us—it is a word in common use, may be given to a new acquaintance, and be used like a mask to wear when it suits our purpose, and thrown aside when no longer required. But where are the friends who are willing to forgive a fault in their friend? Where are they who

† Hebrew i. 10. ‡ Heb. i. 3.

acknowledge their friend in adversity? This may appear trifling, but must be repeated to those who have not learned friendship from the example of our Lord. You see a wealthy and prosperous man, surrounded by a host of false friends, who profane that name with their lips, in a little while he may be reduced to the utmost want, instead of filling some honorable station, courted and fawned upon by all, he may perhaps be laid on a bed of sickness in some lowly dwelling, and deprived of all that could soften the bitterness of his situation. Where are the heartless companions who surrounded him but the other day, and overwhelmed him with the hypocritical demonstrations of their attachment? I do not see them near him—he is poor, so they would blush to call him friend—he is unhappy, that is alone a crime.

You who have been pained by the instability of human regard, who are suffering, slighted, and neglected by the cold unfeeling world: come to Jesus, he will prove your friend. Do not expect to receive from man the comfort your heart requires. “* Behold thou trusteth upon the staff of this bruised reed, on which, if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it.” What human aid could you find to fill the void within your soul? What could lighten your sighs, and dry your tears? If you have not called upon Jesus as your friend, he has been before hand with you, and has called you by that tender name,

* 2 Kings xviii. 21.

and with the name has given you all the privileges of friendship. Let not a sense of your unworthiness alarm you, and keep you from him. “* He came to seek and save that which was lost.” He was not offended when he was called the “† friend of publicans and sinners.” Neither let your poverty or low condition deter you. He it was, who “‡ though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” Far different are your human protectors, who call themselves friends, whom you approach in trembling through a parade of ostentation and pride. Jesus, who is willing to be your friend, was born in a manger—his attendants consisted of a few fishermen from the Lake of Gennesareth. The sick whom he cured—the poor whom he relieved, and the afflicted whom he comforted, were his sole companions. Unlike our earthly friends, whose love lasts only while they feel enjoyment from it—Jesus is always the same, always ready to receive and love you—the more you are afflicted and suffering—the more you are humble and contrite—the more willing is he to call you his friend. Therefore, I repeat, come to Jesus—open your heart to him—call him your friend, he invites you to do so, and to pour out your grief in the pure and inexhaustible fountain of his love. “§ If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.” “|| Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

* St. Luke xix. 10. † Luke vii. 34. ‡ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

§ St. John vii. 37. || St. Matt. xi. 28.

“ Our friend Lazarus sléepeth.”—Jesus does not say my friend, he does not exclude his Disciples from this sacred friendship; he who is the friend of Jesus is the friend of all whom he loves: the maxim of this world, that no man can have more than one friend is humiliating, false, and egotistical. It shews, very plainly, of what value is friendship, or indeed any of our affections, where the love of Christ is not the bond of union—may this narrow-mindedness be far from us. If Jesus be our friend, all those who love him are our friends. Also, “ See how they love each other,” exclaimed the astonished Heathens, when they first beheld the behaviour of the primitive Christians to one another. There is a powerful but invisible chain which unites all those who love Jesus in amity; he is the head, they are the members; such a bond unites space and time, heaven and earth. From the time of Abel till the very latest of the believers, even those who are raising their hearts to Jesus from the centre of the Heathen Islands, all form an united band of friends round Jesus—“ * All continue with one accord in supplication and prayer,” all walk together towards Zion, “ † to the general assembly and Church of the first born,” there to be united for ever by the grace of his everlasting love.

Let us turn to the history of David—“ † And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” Then Jonathan and David made a cove-

* Acts i. 14. † Hebrews xii. 23. ‡ 1 Samuel xviii. 1 & 3.

nant, because he loved him as his own soul.” * “ And they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded, and Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, the Lord be between thee and me, and between my seed and thy seed for ever.” † But if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away that thou mayest go in peace, and the Lord be with thee as he has been with my father.” Now let us look at the early Christians—“ ‡ And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul : neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common.” One of the pillars of the Primitive Church, the apostle Peter, was imprisoned by Herod ; the following day, it was intended he should undergo the punishment prepared for him. “ § Peter, therefore, was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him.” The Angel of the Lord broke his chains, and restored him to the believers. The apostle Paul was conducted a prisoner to Rome in the name of Jesus : he arrived there after he had suffered shipwreck, his life being in imminent danger. He was overcome by the fatigues of his journey, and the weight of the chains he bore for the sake of his Saviour. “ || When the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appi

* 1 Samuel xx. 41 & 42. † 1 Samuel xx. 13. ‡ Acts iv. 22.

§ Acts xii. 5. || Acts xxviii. 16.

Forum, whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage."

Oh, Christian travellers! if ye be burdened with the sorrows of your earthly pilgrimage, imitate St. Paul, and "take courage." You do not tread your thorny path alone—you are preceded by millions, friends to Jesus and yourself. They may have toiled on the road, perhaps even more than you have, and have been purified by fire that they may meet him face to face; you are accompanied and succeeded by millions, who, like yourself, wish to take up their cross daily to follow Christ. They all love you as a brother, if you belong by adoption to the family of God. In the hour of danger, when you think you are alone, and left to your own weakness, numbers of your brethren will sympathise in your sorrows, offer their supplications to heaven for you, and restore you to consolation and peace. O Jesus! what happiness to be thy friend, and to form one of that kingdom which thou camest down from Heaven to establish—"Thy kingdom come."

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."—This is the close of their pilgrimage to those who love Jesus. Death no longer appears frightful with its mournful train of agonies and fears, it is no longer the "King of terrors," announcing itself to the unpardoned sinner in a voice of thunder, and piercing through the very depths of an awakened conscience. It is no longer a dark sepulchre, coming to swallow up all our hopes and

joys for ever. It is no longer a mysterious and fearful eternity, compared to which annihilation would be a blessing—no, it is a sweet sleep which succeeds the painful anxieties of life—it is the repose which follows the weariness of a long journey. The friend of Jesus sleeps, he does not die. “The maid is not dead,” Jesus said, as he went into a house where pious parents were lamenting the death of an only daughter—“*She is not dead but sleepeth.” With this sweet image the Lord veils the terrors of death, after having destroyed its sting. As an infant sleeps peacefully on its mother’s bosom, so the friend of Jesus sleeps in the arms of a tender and merciful father, till the sound of the last trumpet calls him to eternal life, and he awakes in the dawn of that day of happiness which his Saviour has purchased for him. “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.” Alas! his life may have been as full of trouble as that of other men; he may have travelled on thorny roads, which may have lacerated his tottering feet—he may have had to climb mountains and cross vallies: his heaviest burden, that of his sins and iniquities, might have nearly overwhelmed him; perhaps, when resting his forehead on his feeble hand, he might have cried like another traveller to Zion, “† My tears have been my meat night and day.” “My soul is disquieted within me.” “Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts, all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.” However, he cherished in his bosom a hope which never failed—he never lost sight of a

* Matt. ix. 24.

† Psalm xlii. 3, 5, 7.

better country—if the whole world deserted him, that country would be the only object of his ambition. When the Israelites were carried captive to Babylon, their looks were all turned to Zion. “* If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth : if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.” With this hope the friend of Jesus was not alone on his journey to Zion, or left to his own weakness. His heavenly friend, omnipotent though invisible, guided his steps, renewed his courage, and lightened his burden, saying, “† Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.” Arrived at the end of his course his last struggle is the most severe, but then he is enabled to say with the Psalmist, in praise of his Redeemer, “† Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” The night fell, darkness encompassed him, but he shortly and clearly discerned the dawn of another day. At the end of his toils and cares he fell asleep—he awoke to see a “§ new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—“|| And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.”

Yes, the former things are passed away—the cares of a life which sin had poisoned with its venom, and

† Psalm cxxxvii. 5, 6.

† St. Mathew ix. 2. † Psalm xlii. 4. § 2 Peter iii. 13. || Rev. xxi. 4.

the chain of corruption which had enslaved the soul, and prevented it from springing up to its eternal destination, are removed for ever. Eternal life appears to throw a feeling of pure delight over our new existence : all that is left of our troubles is a gentle remembrance, source of everlasting gratitude to the wisdom and mercy of God, whose ways are for the first time revealed to us. All else is past away like a troubled dream of the night, when one awakes in the sunshine of a bright morning. All seems blended with the love of God, whose presence is fullness of joy, and to him who has conquered for us, to the Lamb who was slain for us, and who redeemed us of all languages, people and tribes, be for ever given honor, glory, and praise. Yes, glory to thee, O Jesus ! who even at the grave can pour such hope of glory into our bosoms ; at thy voice the tears of mourners may be changed into songs of thanksgivings and praise, and at thy presence the terrors of death may be changed into ineffable and eternal felicity.

My beloved friends, I had intended to finish my lecture here—but shall I own it ? an involuntary fear steals into my mind in the midst of all these soothing thoughts—I fear that these heavenly truths, taught us by Jesus himself, may be to some of you merely as the dreams of a bright imagination, a sort of religious fiction. I dread that even should your heart be alive to the voice of your Saviour, that you might confine yourself to an unfruitful admiration of the doctrine he gave to man—I dread, in fact, that you may con-

tinue far from God, and live without his love. Should this be the case with any one here, he must know he is not the friend of Jesus. If he be living without God, or without being "born again," Jesus could not say of him, as he did of Lazarus, "Our friend sleepeth." The end of that man is not rest, it is death, the destruction of his mortal body, followed by what the Bible calls "the second death." Oh! while Jesus comes to you as a friend, and not as a judge, hasten to believe in his word, in his promises, and in his love. To-morrow it may be too late—"Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."—If you acknowledge Jesus as your Saviour, during your life, he will be your friend at the hour of death. May the Almighty God bless you with such a friend; and may those who are dear to you, and who would lament your departure, write upon your tomb in the name of Jesus, being full of joyful hope of their own glorious advent—"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."

• 2 Cor. vi. 2.

LECTURE VI.

THE FEAR OF DEATH. DISGUST FOR LIFE.

Then said his Disciples, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow Disciples, let us also go, that we may die with him.—*St. John xi. 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16.*

There is something in the little history which we have been considering peculiarly interesting, it is more easily felt than described. Every word pronounced by Jesus conveys to the soul a feeling as tender as it is deep, and affects us so sweetly, that we are obliged to say, “* Surely, never man spake like this man.” We must also add, that no man ever wrote like St. John. Jesus, driven by persecution to the other side of Jordan, received there the sad news that Lazarus, whom he loved, was ill. It is always more distressing to hear that those we love are ill, when we are far from them—Jesus appeared to have felt this in common with human nature, he hastened to comfort his Disciples and those who brought him the message, with these words—“This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God,”—he purposed to return into Judea, that he might bestow the blessings of his power and grace on those he loved. His Disciples opposed this on account of the hatred the Jews bore him, and the danger of delivering himself up to men who had so lately sought to stone him. Jesus encour-

* *St. John vii. 40.*

raged them by reminding them of the shortness of their time, of the twelve hours of the day, which were passing so quickly away. "You must walk while there is light, if a man walk in the night he stumbleth." To convince them of the necessity of his return to Judea, he desired they should know that Lazarus was no more; but instead of using language which might fill them with painful thoughts, he told it to them in the gentlest manner—"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth"—then it would seem that he regretted to have given them pain, and kindly added, "but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." However, his Disciples did not understand him, they thought that "he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep"—they indulged the hope of a speedy recovery—"Lord," said they, "if he sleep he shall do well." Jesus must then tell them the sad truth plainly, but scarcely had the words "Lazarus is dead," escaped from his lips than he comforted them, saying, "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe. Nevertheless, let us go unto him." Oh what a kind master! Lord give us knowledge and love that we may fully enter into the unspeakable consolation of the words that proceed from thy divine mouth.

Notwithstanding the love Jesus felt for his Disciples, and the tender care he took to instruct them, we find them full of ignorance and weakness; so true is it that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God." The saying of the Disciples,

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

"if he sleep he shall do well," proves the warm interest they took in Lazarus; they rejoiced in the idea that his sufferings were ended, and thought he had fallen into a sweet and refreshing sleep. This passage shews us clearly that man rarely attained the right understanding of our Lord's sayings, but constantly interpreted, in an earthly and carnal manner, what Jesus said with much delicacy and grace, in order to spare them pain. It was a daily and severe trial in the life of Christ that his associates were men whose ignorant minds were perpetually recurring to earthly things, and he never had any return for his trouble in teaching them; he had, however, selected them, as "† chosen vessels," and he "‡ who had not where to lay his head," had not even the comfort of one friend in whom he could confide.

What an example of patience do we receive here from Jesus! These men had followed him and listened to him for more than three years, and still could not understand one of his most simple thoughts. How vexed we are, if those around us are not capable of entering into our meaning; we often feel impatient at it, some times even sorrowful, but we seldom try to explain ourselves more clearly as Jesus did, bringing ourselves down to their level, making them aware of our love, so that their hearts may comprehend us, even though their understandings do not. What distressing arguments, angry disputes, hatred, and animosity would be avoided in this world, if we used

† Acts ix. 15. ‡ Mat. viii. 20.

the same forbearance to our fellow-creatures, that Jesus did to his Disciples. Those men who, by their vocation and influence, are called upon to instruct mankind, would be far different from what they are, if they followed the example of their Divine Master. In whatever light we contemplate his character, we are covered with humiliation and shame—"O Lord ! righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces."

But there is a still more important lesson to be drawn from this passage. The Disciples had just opposed our Lord's intended return to Judea, having a vague and fearful presentiment of the sufferings that awaited him, and to which they might possibly be themselves exposed. Jesus had foretold them all: we read their anxious fear in these words—"If he sleep he shall do well," meaning, that if he be well why should Jesus return into Judea? Thus the important lesson which Jesus had given them on the necessity of employing faithfully "the twelve hours of the day," without shrinking from trials or even from death, had no effect whatever on them; their hearts were "† slow to believe." They had the same fearful forebodings as ever; the prospect before them destroyed their courage, and deprived them of all energy and devotion. How plainly do I see the work of sin in death; death which inspires us with such horror, and is accompanied by darkness, agony, and dissolution. Yes, it is sin which has engraved on

* Daniel ix. 7. † Luke xxiv. 25.

his livid forehead these mournful words, “* the wages of sin is death.”

But how weak must have been the faith of the Disciples, that they were thus overcome by fear, when the Prince of Life marched at their head; he who had dominion over death and the grave; he who is “the resurrection and the life.” What! cannot their ideas be lifted above this earth, when he who guides them is “Him to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth.” He who has deprived death of its sting, the grave of its victory, and eternity of its terrors! From the time that Jesus crossed the river Jordan to return into Judea their hearts were filled with fear, perhaps also with sorrow, seeing that Jesus was hastening on to his last sufferings. Till now they had secretly hoped for a glorious termination to his earthly mission, (one that would have astounded mankind) and expected that they might have shared his glory. They are ready to cry out with St. Peter, when he heard his Master foretelling his death—“† Be it far from thee Lord, this shall not be unto thee” But now their vision of a great terrestrial kingdom, founded by their Master, is vanished, and with it their brightest hopes—their dread of coming events engrossed them, and prevented them from discerning the Lord’s meaning—the word of the Lord can only be understood by the assurance of faith, and the calmness of perfect confidence.

* Rom. vi. 23.

† St. Matt. xvi. 23.

Alas ! here again we must not blame the Disciples, they are a faithful index of what passes in our own minds. Do we not incessantly find within us the weakness and sin which Jesus fights against in his Disciples ? How often does the mere anticipation of trials make us shudder, and unfit us for receiving the infallible consolation of our Lord ? This is a most dangerous stumbling block to Christians during their probation—instead of bowing with adoration, and even to the dust, under the hand that strikes the blow, asking with the submission of a dutiful child—“ My God what wilt thou do with me,” we are troubled, we are “ * full of labour, man cannot utter it.” Our wayward hearts recoil under every fresh trial ; distracted by such tumultuous feelings, who can listen to the voice of a kind father saying, “ † My son despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction.” When unbelief and distrust fill the soul with trouble in the hour of affliction, they will fill it with agony at the approach of death. If an angel from heaven should come to you at this moment, and tell you, as from the Almighty, that this was your last day, that to-morrow your eyes would be closed, your body lifeless, and your soul passed into eternity, what would be your feelings ? Would not anguish and terror, regrets and fears alternately torment you ? Probably most of you would say that they would. What must we then conclude ? Alas ! alas ! that your faith is weak, that your Saviour God,

* Eccles. i. 8. † Prov. iii. 11.

whom you profess to love, and whom you come to worship in these temples, is not the life of your soul ; that the world hath a stronger hold on you than he ; that you have not yet “† passed from death unto life ;” that you have not “§ received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father.”

Could you but look to eternity (the very name of which makes you tremble) as an everlasting kingdom of love, passed in the presence of him who has so truly loved you, what could you fear? Will the poor exile, who has long been sighing for and looking towards the country which contains all he holds dear on earth, fear the moment which recalls him from banishment, restores him to the home of his fathers, to those dear relations, who, trembling with joy, clasp him to their bosoms, and dry the bitter tears his absence had caused? And will you, strangers and pilgrims on this earth, will you fear to cross the barrier which divides time from eternity? Will you fear to meet in a better world the heavenly Father who so tenderly loved you, the merciful Saviour who ransomed you with his own blood, and who is willing to be your brother, your friend and comforter? Would you fear to inhabit that place where all the blessed spirits, of those who loved Christ, are assembled together? Would you fear to lay aside the bonds of corruption which you are now dragging after you, and be free

† 1 St. John iii. 14.

§ Rom. viii. 15.

to enjoy the glorious liberty given to the children of God, where there is no more sorrow, pain, or separation, because there is no more sin. No, no, “* for me to live is Christ, to die is gain.” The Disciples did not yet understand our Lord, he must tell them why in spite of their fears he must return to Judea. “Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.” At these words their hearts were cast down, and filled with sadness; the word dead, pronounced necessarily but reluctantly by their Master, brought before them melancholy ideas of separation, burial, &c. &c. and deeply grieved them. Lazarus, their beloved friend, the friend also of Jesus, no longer lives; they will never again be welcomed with his cordial smile; his house will no longer be an asylum for them and their Master. These sad thoughts crowded before them, and you who have had some dear friend, some Lazarus torn from you by the hands of death, may imagine how painful these reflections were. You know what a void, what a desolation such a loss leaves behind, and that in the misery of such a separation, our spirits would even wish to take flight, and follow to another world the beloved being whom death hath removed.

Beloved Disciples of the Lord! who weep for Lazarus, listen to your master, to the prince of life, when he speaks of death, and rejoice with him, or at any rate take courage. “I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe.”

* Phil. i. 21.

What a strange consolation, my brethren, "I am glad;" and he is speaking of the death of one he loved—those who in trials expect relief from the joyless comforters of this world, will consider that word of consolation as cruel almost as ironical. Often does a poor mortal, ignorant of God's intentions towards him, weep and lament over the sorrows of his life, and often does Jesus, from the highest heavens, watch over his child, saying with tenderness, "I am glad for your sake," and the Angels of God "who have joy over one sinner that repenteth," make the heavens resound with the words, "I am glad."

"And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe." Jesus might have been there—he might have gone at once to Bethany with his Disciples, have surrounded the dying couch of Lazarus, and by speaking one word might have restored him to health; but, no! it would not have been sufficient for his Disciples faith, or he might have permitted that in their presence: Lazarus might have suffered death, that they should be eye-witnesses of the afflicting scene, and have the mournful satisfaction of following him to the grave, from whence he might have been recalled by our Lord's power. But, no! Jesus rejoiced that he was not there, that those he loved had been spared such hours of anxiety and distress, he only led them to the grave of Lazarus, to make them eye-witnesses of the most astounding manifestation of his power and divinity—that they

St. Luke xv. 10.

might see how Lazarus, at the voice of Jesus, burst asunder the bonds of death—that they might take part in the glorious triumph of their Lord, and in the joy of Martha and Mary; in one word, that they might have stronger faith in him, who came down from the Father, was made manifest in the flesh, and worshipped by the Angels of God.

O ye Disciples ! who have been the objects of such love and tender solicitude, let your voice be heard in all times and all places—come, and instruct us, animate our minds, penetrate our hearts, increase our faith, shew us how to live and die in the love of Christ. Jesus added, “ nevertheless, let us go unto him,” when he was consoling his Disciples by these holy thoughts he feared to appear insensible to the afflictions of his friends at Bethany, and as his arms of mercy were ever unfolded to his own people, he quickens the tardiness of his Disciples, which to his zeal appeared much too slow, saying, “ let us go unto him :” but, why? Lazarus is dead and buried; why should they go to him? what does that signify? Can “ * death or life separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus?” Could the cold stone laid over the grave of Lazarus be any obstacle to the ardent love of Jesus, though it shut him out from the living world? No, “ in all things,” said St. Paul, “ † we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

However, the Disciple, Thomas, naturally of a melancholy disposition, and a doubting mind, could

* Rom. viii. 38.

† Rom. viii. 37.

not enter into the consolation our Lord offered him. The Poet has justly given the following words to his guardian Angel, when describing his character :—

“ * His mind is continually wrapt in meditation—
 “ thoughts frequently produce thoughts, without end,
 “ and extend before him like a boundless sea. He
 “ was once almost lost in the dark system of sadducean
 “ dreams, but was saved by the mighty miracles of
 “ the Messiah. Then leaving the mazy labyrinths
 “ of entangling error he came to Jesus, yet still hard
 “ of conviction he would fill me with solicitude, did
 “ I not know that with his active mind he has sincerity
 “ of heart, and ardent love of virtue.”

The thoughts of death so saddened his mind as to give him a disgust for life, he thus reasons within himself: Lazarus is dead—my Master returns to Judea, where cruel persecutions and death are awaiting him; what good would my life be then to me? for what should I tarry on earth? what would become of me without Lazarus without my Master? this world would be a desert full of separations and contentions; turning to his fellow Disciples he said, “let us also go that we may die with him.”

How wonderful, that in the first part of this lecture, I spoke against the fear of death, and now, at its conclusion, I must fight against a disgust to life, so true is it that all extremes meet in that perverse creature, man. Alas! there is something but too na-

* Klopstocks Messiah, Book the 3d.

tural to man in the words which Thomas's despair had wrung from him, but it was the expression of a feeling disapproved by God, and which we must strive to conquer. Poor mortal ! because God has put you to severe trials and has given you a bitter cup to taste, is your life a burden to you ? do you wish to die ? Because one dearly loved by you, and of whom, perhaps, you made an idol, has been removed, and this world appears to you a barren desert, do you wish to die ? Because the hope that from day to day had supported your faith and softened your misery appears fading away, has despondency filled your mind, and do you wish to die ? Because it seems as if God no longer listened to your supplications, you think you have nothing before you but utter despair, and you wish to die ? Do not deceive yourself, that feeling has nothing in common with that holy impatience which St. Paul felt when he said “ * he had a desire to depart and to be with Christ.” No, what you feel under your trials is a guilty rebellion against God's supreme will, your murmurs and dismay are proofs of a cowardly distrust in that heavenly Saviour, who promised that “ * he will never allow you to be tempted above what you are able to bear.” If you love the Lord—if your heart is submissive, no rebellious feeling could enter into it—you would know by experience “ † that all things work together for good to them that love God.” If you do not love him, and feel that he is your Saviour, Redeemer, and

* Phil. i. 23. † 1 Cor. xx. 13. ‡ Rom. viii. 28.

Mediator, what can you expect in that life to which you are wishing to hasten? What do you look to in eternity? Why would you rush before your time into the awful scenes of the last day? Why will you place yourself at the bar of final judgment? Are you prepared to appear before a just judge? Are you ready to give an account of all the actions, words, and even thoughts of a sinful life? Go to Christ, as your Saviour, and be content to live, until he calls you to him as your judge. Even suppose you have no reason to fear eternity, but have a testimony within you, sent by the Holy Spirit, that Jesus has saved you, has expiated your sins, that his blood has washed away your stains, why would you desire impatiently to shorten the time of your probation? Why would you, before the appointed time, lay down the burden imposed on you? Have you nothing to do in this life? Have you no poor to relieve, no unfortunate to console, no ignorant to instruct? No! you say, I am so situated that I can be of no use to any one—this afflicts me more than all my other sorrows. I can do nothing, but mourn my inutility and sin. Do you not remember, my dear brother, that you are now schooled by the Spirit of God? He desires to enlarge and purify the faculties of your soul, and fit it more and more for the enjoyment of that infinite love, which will be hereafter the element of your existence? Yes, by edifying your companions by your patience under suffering, you will further the views of the Almighty for you, which are to fulfil in you the prayer of St.

Paul for his brethren of Thessalonica—" * And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

" Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."

This day of our Lord, appointed by the wisdom and love of God, will come soon enough to us all, and then whatever degree of sanctification we may have attained, we shall feel greatly ashamed at our cowardice, our want of fortitude under trials, the weakness of our zeal for so good a master, the coldness of our love for so merciful a Saviour.

O God ! increase our faith, our hope, our love—give us grace to employ more profitably our short time of trial—let us so live that we may praise thee here on earth, and also in heaven to all eternity !

LECTURE VII.

THE FOUR DAYS OF TRIAL.

Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem about fifteen furlongs off. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him ; but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again.—*St. John xi. 17, 24.*

In our last lecture, we left Jesus proceeding to Bethany with his Disciples, and giving them, by the way, grave and important instructions relative to his future plans. The day of trial will soon pass away.

* 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.

from Martha and Mary—they had lately trodden a dark path and were full of sorrow, vainly expecting help and quite disheartened at the conduct of their heavenly friend : he goes to them and speaks of faith, comfort, and eternal life. The Evangelist returns to Bethany, and tells us of all that had passed there, since the message his master had received from thence. “ Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.” We will follow Jesus to Bethany, and while considering the afflictions of the sisters, and how different were the consolations of the Jews from those of Jesus, may we learn to look for peace and happiness where only they can be found.

“ Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.” We suppose that Lazarus died the very day his sisters sent to Jesus, and as Jesus abode two days more in Perea, about a day’s journey from Bethany, he did not arrive there till the fourth day after the death of Lazarus—according to the custom of the Jews in those days he was buried immediately.

He fell asleep in the faith of his forefathers—he closed his eyes on this life of misery with the steadfast hope of awaking in realms of everlasting bliss. Like Simeon, he might say when he left all he held dear on earth, “ * Lord ! now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” He had entered the har-

* St. Luke, ii. 29.

hour where he had cast the anchor of his hopes, but his dear sisters were left behind to baffle with the waves and storms of life. St. John does not describe their conflicts or their sorrows, but our hearts can tell us what grief and mourning they must have endured for those four days—their brother, their friend, their companion and earthly support had been taken from them—all their love could not rescue him from the cold embrace of death: they had watched his last look, heard his last farewell, all they had left of him was a remembrance, a bitter regret—his place was vacant, his mortal remains were already removed and become the prey of corruption. O! ye wretched fruits of sin which brought such ruin into the Paradise of God! The silence of death, broken only by their sighs, reigns in that dwelling so lately filled by the kind feelings of brotherly love. All is changed, domestic joys are fled, and nothing left but tears and sorrow. “*The voice said, Cry. And he said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

Brothers and sisters, parents, and friends, and all you that are surrounded with tender objects of affection, mind, that though you are permitted to love them, yet you should beware that you do not rest your hopes of happiness on their fragile lives. Love them as

* Isaiah xl. 6.

creatures of eternity, not of earth—love them for God's sake more than for your own. Listen to the advice of the great Disciple of love preserved to us in the sacred pages—he, after a long experience of life, after having grown old in the exercise of the love he constantly recommended, traced these words with an aged and enfeebled hand, “* Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

However, these four tedious days passed away without our Lord's appearing in Bethany. Jesus, who alone could bring comfort to these distracted sisters—Jesus, whose assistance they unceasingly implored—Jesus, who never turned a deaf ear to the complaints of the sorrowful, came not. Where will be their faith? What will be their hope? One word from our Saviour could remove their sorrow—they acknowledged his power, and yet he only sends them an obscure answer, which was quite unintelligible to them: “This sickness is not unto death, but unto the glory of God.” Yet their brother had already been four days in the grave, and his remains were fast falling to decay.

My dear brothers, if any of you be naturally incredulous and soon cast down, do you not find yourselves filled with distrust and weakness in such moments of trial? Learn then from Martha and Mary to know the hidden ways of the Lord—learn from Abraham

* 1 St. John v. 21.

and all the children of God, who gained the victory through much warfare “† to hope for that we see not.” Should your minds be distrustful, your souls a barren desert, your faith not victorious, and your hopes not directed to a better country—should the word of the Lord not speak to your souls, nor prayer be to you like a spring of living waters, could you see no remedies for your sorrows, but that your eyes were fixed on darkness and on bottomless pits. O ! do not shudder at all this : for thence an immovable faith may spring up in your hearts, and the bonds of your union with the Almighty become so strong, that they never can be broken again. Jesus is there—he approaches—it was his mighty hand which placed you in this abyss, and when you have learned there to think nothing of yourselves, your strength or your merits, but to put your whole trust in him, then his powerful arm will support you, and remove you to the sublime realms of faith : you will there bless him for your sufferings, and acknowledge all that they have taught you. The sisters of Lazarus will shew us how to praise and magnify the Lord, after having just shewn us how to humble ourselves under his hand.

Martha and Mary had not been left without the consolations which this world affords. “ Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, fifteen furlongs off, which was about a mile and a half, and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother.” It was the custom of the Jews, when one

† Rom. viii. 25.

of a family was dead, that the friends all assembled to mourn with the afflicted relatives. It might have been a good custom had it been done in the spirit of him, who saith, “† I, even I, am he that comforteth you.” But every thing that proceeds from man, even lamentations and mournings degenerate into mere lifeless ceremony; I was going to say, into hypocrisy. The Jews assembled round the family of the deceased, instead of seeking in reminiscences and prayer that spirit which is called “the Comforter,” filled the air with dismal cries and loud wailings. If the departed were much loved and regretted by his family, then their lamentations assumed the appearance of violent frenzy; they tore their hair, rent their clothes, put on sackcloth, covered themselves with ashes, uttering, at the same time, piercing cries, which increased in loudness when they saw the relations of the dead giving vent to their grief. In some cases women were engaged to increase the gloom of these funeral meetings, to weep and mourn over the dead, and, at the conclusion, men were hired to accompany these mournful ceremonies with musical instruments. St. Mathew mentions them when he relates the restoring to life of Jairus’s daughter. “* And when Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, he said unto them, give place.”—Certainly, in our days, it is not the custom thus to comfort the afflicted, but how many false comforters are there, to whom the Lord would say, either with indignation or compassion—“Give place.” What

† Isaiah li. xii.

* St. Mathew ix. 23.

passes in a house of mourning where the Lord's name is not sought for? People go to pay what is called a visit of condolence, a long string of virtues is recorded as having belonged to the deceased—every one repeats to his deluded friends, that he must be happy, whatever may have been his principles, or his life: that he deserved heaven: or, if it be allowed that he had any weaknesses, they rely upon some vague idea of the goodness of God, never considering either his justice or his holiness. Should there be no stain upon his name, his family are told to be proud of his memory—then they add, that it is necessary to submit to what cannot be avoided. It is the course of nature, we are all mortal; there is another and a better world. These and such trifles as these, are repeated over and over, and perhaps a few tears may be shed. Such are the consolers and the consolations of this wretched world. "Give place," ye sorry comforters, or if you really sympathise in my grief speak to me candidly of the intentions of the Almighty in sending me these afflictions—tell me how I should humble myself under his dispensations, he afflicts me in order to correct me—speak to me of my Saviour who died that he might conquer death, and sin, the cause of death—speak to me of the oblation he offered that he might obtain for me pardon and grace—speak to me of the invitations of his love, and of "the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Give me one of his promises, and could I be so blessed as to apply it to.

* 2 Peter, iii. 13.

myself, and to the dear departed, I shall indeed be comforted ; and should I still water his grave with my tears it will not be like one who “ * sorrows not even as others which have no hope.” But if you cannot speak thus, you may still shew the pity you feel for me by praying for your friend : ask of God to sanctify to my eternal benefit, the trial with which he afflicts me, to grant that I may bow my head with submission, and my heart with adoration under the strokes of his chastisements, which are so many lessons of grace—pray to him to apply to my heart, by the power of his Holy Spirit, the ineffable consolations of his word, and if then you should only remain near me, I feel as if even your silence would comfort me. It is the Christian alone who can, by principles and manner, shew that delicacy of feeling that acts as a balm to the soul, and comforts by a word or a look, though it might be even a silent one.

However, Jesus drew nigh unto Bethany—let us follow him, and see the powerful effect of his presence upon the afflicted sisters. Then Martha when she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him, but Mary sat still in the house. Here again we see the sisters acting consistently with the difference of their dispositions, each of them ardently desired the consolations of their divine friend, but while the active Martha gives way to the first warm impulse of her heart, and flies to meet Jesus—Mary (though feeling even more deeply the need of his presence)

* 1 Thess. iv. 13.

appears overwhelmed with the sorrows of her sensitive mind. She seemed to wait till Jesus came to lift, with a merciful hand, the heavy cross which weighed her down. If we study mankind, we must perceive the different shades of feelings and conduct, in their religious character, though they may have one faith, one love, and one hope in common; and the details of this story, so minutely characteristic and recorded by an eye witness, under the guidance of that spirit "that searchest all hearts" would furnish us (were it wanting) with a powerful testimony of its truth.

Leaving Mary in silent grief, waiting for the consolation of her Saviour, let us follow Martha who hastened to meet him, "as the thirsty deer flieth to the water brooks." She threw herself at his feet—she knew that he alone could heal the sorrows of her heart: she had expected him four days, she now beheld him. "Jesus was there." When Jesus was actually present to her sight, her drooping faith revived, and a faint ray of hope darted through her. The Jews, who had come from Jerusalem to weep with her, were quite unheeded. She left them to throw herself at the feet of Jesus, and there gave way to the ardent desire she felt of imparting her sorrows to him. Certain of finding pity and sympathy, she laid down her burden, saying, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,"—there was grief, amounting almost to despair, expressed in these words. She could then only think of the death of

her dear brother—it appeared as if Jesus had come too late to assist her ; there was, however, a small remnant of faith that kindled and revived at the sight of him. She thought that had Jesus been there he could have cured her brother, deprived death of its prey, and the grave of its victory. As a plant which is beat down and crushed by the storm, insensibly revives under the genial influence of the rays of the sun, so did a little germ of faith, quietly vegetating in Martha's bosom, shoot up and blossom, at the kind but majestic aspect of the Saviour. She stood before the High Priest who could “ * be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” At every look at her Redeemer her faith seemed strengthened—her hopes revived—the darkness of her mind seemed dissipating, and unspeakable comfort was gradually taking its place. She felt that Jesus came to succour her, and that his infinite love and boundless power could grant all her supplications. With confiding love she exclaims, “ But I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.” What triumphant faith ! How soon did the presence of the Saviour bring peace and joy to her afflicted mind ! She had looked to him with faith, and there is but one step from faith to peace and joy ; the first fruit of faith is “ † that peace of God which passeth all understanding.” Those among you that are disciples of Jesus, and feel that he is present with you, need never utter that painful cry, “ Lord, hadst thou been

* Hebrews iv. 15.

† Phil. iv. 7.

here." You know he is always near you, and always ready to listen to you. Why then should not your faith be as strong as Martha's? Why cannot you resign yourself wholly as she did to the love of Jesus? Why is your heart disquieted within you? O! does not this proceed from a want of faith? Instead of going forth, as Martha did from her sorry comforters, to meet Jesus, whose presence was to her " * a fullness of joy," you seek comfort from Man, who can give you none; instead of drawing refreshing draughts for your soul from the fountains of living waters, you either " † hew out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no waters," or else you abandon yourself to despair, instead of relying on the promise of God as Martha did, when she said to Jesus " But now (yes, even now, when all seems lost, and even my fondest hopes are vanished,) whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God shall give it thee," instead of acting thus do you not open your Bible with misgivings, as if it were not the word of God, and as if the invitations of that word were not addressed to you? Then, again, if you kneel down to pray in a full sense of your unworthiness, do you not address yourself to Jesus as if he were not " ‡ able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him:"—as if he had not given you " § an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you:" as if his arm were shortened that he could not save, or as if his love were not sufficient

* Psalm xvi. 11, † Jer. ii. 15. ‡ Hebrews vii. 25. § 1 Peter i. 4.

to urge him to do so. “ * O fools! why are ye so slow of heart to believe all that the word of God hath revealed.” Do we not all know as well as Martha, that all that our powerful Mediator asks of God, God will give it him? Cannot we rely on this merciful invitation, “ † If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.” Oh! it is faith which is wanting to us, “ ‡ Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.”

Thus did the presence of our Lord transport Martha from a state of misery and despair to a state of confidence and peace. Jesus replies to her in a way that must increase her faith, and accompanies his words with a promise so precious as to surpass all that Martha could hope or desire: so true it is that “ § he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.” Martha does not wait for her Lord’s reply—her afflicted heart seems only to expect from Jesus the submission and fortitude necessary for her to bear up against such a loss; or rather, she does not ask any thing—she leaves it all in the hands of Jesus, and he promises her the happiness she did not dare look for in this world: “ Thy brother shall rise again.” It is not by much speaking that our Lord comforts the afflicted—no, it is by a promise that will raise them above their misfortunes—for a promise from him “ || that cannot lie,” is equivalent to a gift. “ Thy brother shall rise again.” How?

* St. Luke xxiv. 25.

† St. John vii. 37.

‡ St. Mark ix. 24.

• Ephesians iii. 20.

† Titus i. 2.

when? by whom? are questions that Martha's faith would urge her to ask. Ah! what are moments or days to Jesus? he at whose voice the dead will one day burst asunder the bonds of the grave! can he not, if he will, raise Lazarus from the dead? "Thy brother shall rise again," let that satisfy thy faith, rely on my power—thou shalt no longer mourn for him, who is so necessary to thy happiness. It was not for the short space of this life only that their hearts were thus united: no, the bond of union between the friends of Jesus could not be severed even by death—the bond is eternal, and having constituted their happiness here, will contribute even more powerfully to their happiness hereafter. But Jesus does not wait for the time when the measure of her joy shall be full, to strengthen Martha's faith; we shall soon see the Prince of life, advancing to the tomb of Lazarus, and using his Almighty power in order to fulfil quickly his promise to Martha. As her faith was not sufficiently established to understand that promise, he does not say to her, as he did on another occasion, " * According to your faith be it unto you," but he does for her " † abundantly above all that she can ask or think."

O! that these promises of God, " † which are in him yea and amen," might be an eternal refuge from the storms and shipwrecks of life, to which we are constantly exposed by the waverings of our own incredulity and weakness. My dear fellow-travellers,

* St. Mathew ix. 29. † Eph. iii. 20. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 20.

through the boisterous voyages of life, these promises alone can shew us the Rock of ages, from whence we may contemplate in security the raging billows of the tempestuous ocean. These promises to us are like the appearance to the benighted mariner of the star which will guide him into port—they alone can shew us “ * the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Having fast hold of these promises let us present them to God as our title deeds, and ask him “ † in full assurance of faith,” for light, strength and eternal life. Then we may find true comfort, even at the tomb of those we best love—these mournful scenes will lose their bitterness, and when they fade away scenes of eternal delights will appear. We already possess these through “ ‡ the hope that maketh not ashamed,” for its foundations are the promises of God. Are there any among you in deep suffering, either mental or bodily? If there are, take courage, approach the throne of mercy with confidence, and say, “ Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick :” remember this promise, “ § he maketh sore and bindeth up, he woundeth and his hands make whole.” Are there any exposed to the pains of poverty and indigence, unable to satisfy the wants of those they love? Let them hasten to Jesus with the promises he has so mercifully given them. “ || If God so clothe the grass which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith.” “ † I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” Are there any among you trembling under

* 2 Peter iii. 13. † Hebrews x. 22. ‡ Rom. v. 5. § Job v. 18.

|| Luke xii. 28.

¶ Hebrews xiii. 5.

an acute sense of sin, and desponding views of salvation, let them fly to their Redeemer, on the strength of these blessed words, “ * Who his own self bare our sins on his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.” “ † Thou camest to seek and save that which was lost.” “ ‡ Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “ § Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” “ || ‘Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow.’” “ ¶ Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters.” “ (a) Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” “ (b) ‘When my father and mother forsake me then the Lord shall take me up.’” Should we be summoned to the painful but tender duty of comforting our fellow-creatures, let us beware of speaking to them in the language of man. Let us approach them in a truly christian spirit; let them see that we feel for them, and are willing to listen to their complaints—when we have induced them to open their hearts to us, let us apply the word of God as a balm to their wounds; they will receive this blessed word into their hearts, and will rise far above all earthly tribulations or sufferings. In them will be renewed the spirit of the Psalmist, who begins his prayer by this cry of distress, “ (c) Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord,” and concludes triumphantly, “ Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

* 1 Peter ii. 24. † Luke xix. 10. ‡ Matt. xi. 28. § John vi. 37.

|| Isaiah i. 18. ¶ Isaiah lv. 1. (a) Psalm ciii. 13.

(b) Psalm xxvii. 10.

(c) Psalm cxxx. 1, 7 and 8.

Happy is the man who has Jesus for his hope! happy is the man who in the midst of the troubles with which this life abounds, can, by the eye of faith fixed on his Saviour, repeat that song of praise, “*The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life of whom should I be afraid.” “Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear, though man should rise against me in this will I be confident.”

My beloved brethern, should you when in trouble not find this faith in your hearts, remember that it is a free gift of God, “† Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.”

LECTURE VIII.

JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.—*John* xi. 24, 28.

Let us return to the very affecting and instructive conversation between Jesus and Martha; we have seen how gradually her faith revived, till at last in “the fullness of hope” she said “Whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee:” however in this instance her reliance on the power and goodness

† *Psalm* xxvii. 1 and 3. § *St. Mathew*. vii 7.

of the Lord, did not lead her to the belief, that he could or would work that most surprising miracle and restore her brother to her. When Jesus gave her the promise (calculated indeed to raise her belief to the most exalted hopes) that her brother should rise again, Martha answered him from one of the Articles of the Jewish creed, "I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection at the last day." So true it is that our firmest trust in the Lord's goodness falls far short of what his Almighty will can accomplish. When Jesus promised Martha the resurrection of her brother, she thought only of that day, when at the sound of the last trumpet "the sea will give up the dead which are in it; and death and the grave will deliver up the dead which are in them." She believed in the resurrection before Jesus came to her, but how imperfect was her faith! how inadequate to raise her above her afflictions and to secure her from doubts and distrust. A mere belief does not relieve us in the hour of trial, unless it be quickened by the presence of Jesus, and his blessed spirit. Alas! how many write upon the tombs of their departed friends—Here he lies waiting for the resurrection at the last day—and yet "† they sorrow as those who have no hope." That our religious persuasions may not lie dormant within us, it is necessary that Jesus, with his love and his promises, should be the life and soul of those persuasions—he alone can teach our spirit that he is "the resurrection and the life." Not only will he,

* Rev. xx. 13. † 1 Thess. iv. 13.

with his mighty voice at the last day, call the dead from their graves, but he is himself the Prince of life—life is in his gift, and he gives it to whom he will; he not only shows the way, teaches the truth, and promises everlasting life, but he says, “* I am the way, the truth, and the life:” he not only lightens those who are in darkness, but he is “† the light of the world,” he not only ransoms sinners, but he is “‡ the Lord our righteousness.” If we be united to him in faith the grace of God is not only promised to us but actually we are in possession of it. “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” Let us meditate on these words—let us transport ourselves with Martha into the presence of Jesus, and O! may He pour into our hearts that life which is the essence of his divine nature.

“I am the resurrection and the life.” Who but Jesus could pronounce these words? Certainly not a human being who is constantly verging to the edge of the grave—not a pitiful worm which one day is born and in a few more is numbered with the dead—not that being which is born with the seeds of the disorder that will take him to his sepulchre, “* like the grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.” No, he who in the abodes of death proclaims himself “the resurrection and the life,” cannot be mortal. Let us listen to the testi-

* John xiv. 6. † John ix. 5. ‡ Jer. xxxiii. 16. § Matt. vi. 30.

monies borne him by the word of truth, “* he it was who made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power.”— “† For as the Father hath life in himself so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” “‡ That eternal word which was in the beginning with God and that was God, all things were made by him.”— “§ Him whom all the Angels of God worship.”— “|| Who is over all God blessed for ever.” Such among a million of others are the testimonies borne by the word of God “which cannot lie:” such are the truths on which the foundation of the Gospel is based—truths often unknown, often misunderstood and often rejected, but which, after eighteen centuries of fruitless opposition, have come down to us in the same triumphant spirit as was manifested at the grave of Lazarus, bringing joy and peace to God’s faithful people: truths which Jesus declares to Martha, as the best calculated to raise her drooping spirit above all sorrow, even above the ravages of sin. “I am the resurrection and the life.”

What an encouraging answer to those who love Christ! These words promise to fallen man the restoration of his first prerogative, and shew him the dawn of a day of happiness: similar to that which brightened his state of innocence before disobedience and sin had sounded in his ear the mournful word,

* Hebrews i. 2 & 3. † St. John v. 26. ‡ St. John i. 1, 2 & 3.
§ Hebrews i. 6. || Rom. ix. 5.

death, and presented to his eye the heart-breaking spectacle of all the sorrows which follow in its train. As he who came to repair the disorder brought by sin is the resurrection and the life, shall we not find in him all that we require in our wretchedness? The first and most pressing want of our souls, and which no created being can bestow, is life—the enjoyment of life—the eternal duration of life. We love all that breathes of life—all that produces it—all that supports it. We shudder at any thing which curtails, endangers, or destroys it. From this feeling springs that cheering sensation that thrills through us, at the return of those early Spring mornings which seem to withered nature as the resurrection and the life—likewise, that sadness that steals over us when we are watching the decay of nature on the approach of winter; from thence the joyful delight we feel at the sight of a child whose every movement seems full of life, and also the painful impression we feel at the sight of a decrepid old man, whose sources of life are dried up, and who has nothing to look to but his last struggles against the hand of death. But these feelings of pain or pleasure produced by the alternations of life and death in the physical world, are as nothing compared to those which regard an immortal soul, for in that case life or death instead of indicating the beginning or end of a finite existence, becomes the condition of a state of endless happiness or endless misery.

In his original state of innocence man enjoyed a fullness of life. Life to him was happiness: a sweet

communion, a holy intercourse with his God : he spent his life in the bosom of his Creator ; he breathed the delicious air of the garden of Eden. Love seemed the element of this primeval state of existence. No other sentiment had sullied the pure mind of man : to love was to him life—but, alas ! when I look around me, and within me—when I see what life now is, Oh ! what a gulf between the primitive and present state of man ! What a tremendous fall ! Sin, rebellion, and pollution, combined to break the close union which had existed between the creature and his Creator, and called for the execution of the sentence pronounced by God ; “ * In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” The soul now parted from God, who cannot behold iniquity, lost its place in heaven—life became corrupt and unsound from its commencement, like a young plant whose root has been injured by the cankerworm. Whatever is sensual and carnal in man has got the mastery over him ; to live is no longer to enjoy the sight of God, but merely to vegetate here for a short time, pampering a depraved will and gratifying evil passions ; to live is to drain to its very dregs (however bitter it may prove) the cup of pleasure and self-love ; and to enjoy the advantages of fortune, honors, and station. Man, according to the true but painful description given by St. Paul, — “ † has now his understanding darkened being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their

* Gen. ii. 17. † Ephes. iv. 18.

hearts." "He is dead in trespasses and sins." As the venom of sin polluted the soul, it became to the body the source of grief, infirmities, sickness, and death. Alas! in every hour that passes, a fresh tomb is opened and fresh tears are shed: no day elapses without some weeping Martha being called to mourn over a brother, a husband, a father, or friend, wherefore, "† as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

"† O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Who will restore us to that state of innocence which we can never recover of ourselves? How shall we regain that gift of life, the life of thy love? Oh God! hast thou rejected us for ever? in order to chastise us for our iniquities? Captives in this Babylon of miseries, do we for ever hang our harps upon the willow trees? Shall we never again sing the songs of Zion to celebrate thy praise, and join in chorus with thy heavenly choir?

Oh my dear brethren, my fellow-sufferers! attend to me, there is a remedy for all these evils. Listen to the words of Jesus, spoken at the grave—"I am the resurrection and the life." Do not imagine that he spoke these divine words in a limited sense, and that he merely meant, that he had the power of restoring warmth to the cold and stiffened limbs of

* Ephes. ii. 1. Romans v. 12.

† Romans vii. 24.

Lazarus, and of raising him from his dreary resting place. No, it is not the act of existing a little more or less in this world, that Jesus calls life: what he denominates life, is the life of the soul—the life of heaven, the immortality which he has made manifest in the Gospel—the life over which death hath no dominion—the life which begins here on earth, in a soul which is “* born again”—the life which St. John calls life eternal, which in one word means an infinity of joy, a joy of which a mortal and sinful being could not even form a faint idea. This is the sense in which Jesus is the life” to all that love him. He is their life because he has vanquished sin which † had reigned unto death—“† he had broken down the middle wall of partition which had separated us eternally from God.” He had taken upon himself the sentence of death pronounced in Eden, and on Mount Sinai, and after having, by his blood, expiated on the cross, that judgment, under which all mankind were condemned, he published the glad tidings, of a free deliverance, pardon, and life. “§ Whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life.” “|| Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my words, and believeth in him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.” “¶ And I give unto them eternal life,” said he, in speaking of his sheep—“they shall never perish.”—“(a) I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

* St. John iii. 3. † Rom. v. 21. ‡ Eph. ii. 14.

§ St. John iii. 15. || St. John v. 24. ¶ St. John x. 28. (a) St. John xiv. 6.

But you may naturally ask how do we participate in this new life? How does Jesus communicate it to us, who, according to the testimony of his own words, "are dead in trespasses and sins." Jesus informs us in the words of our text, "he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." He repeats this twice to us. We must believe in him " * in full assurance of faith," founded on his unfailing love and on the sure testimony of his word—we must believe that he has ransomed us—that he has saved us, and that, notwithstanding our infirmities, he will take us to himself—we must believe that he has given us " † the glorious liberty of the children of God," that is, the right of being restored to all the privileges which we had forfeited by sin, and at the last day of being presented to God our father, with the redeemed of all nations, of all languages, of all tribes—all which he has purchased for us by his blood.

The faith which Jesus demands throughout the whole of his written word, and which in our text he requires of all to whom he is the resurrection and the life, far from remaining idle and passive in the mind of man, becomes, on the contrary, an active and energetic stimulus towards leading a new life. It is the sap which conveys life to the branches of a tree, just beginning to bud, and by its juice, produces

* Heb. x. 22. † Rom. viii. 21.

to the joy of its possessor, leaves, flowers, and fruit. O! ye men of the world, ye moralists, philosophers, and political economists, ye may seek elsewhere for a principle of moral regeneration, either national or individual, but the fruitlessness of your efforts will bring you back to him, who alone is the resurrection and the life, and to the method which he points out of obtaining that life. It is faith alone which can renew eternal life in our souls—disengage them from the fetters of sin, animate them with the spirit of adoption, by which we may, with the Apostle, rise to the glorious liberty of the children of God, and repeat with joy “ * We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit whereby we cry Abba, Father.” It is faith which shewing us the Redeemer’s love, higher than the Heavens, and deeper than the most profound abyss, breaks the hardness of our hearts, and expels from them our coldness and self-love. It is faith which alone can renew a right spirit within us, fill us with an energy and devotion, to which we had hitherto been strangers, and lead us on to love, above all things, him “ † Who first loved us”—it is faith which can alone produce in an immortal soul, the germ of a life which cannot perish—victorious over time and death, it will arrive triumphantly in the bright realms of everlasting love, there to be developed before him, in whose “ ‡ presence is fullness of joy.”

Such is the way which Jesus has planned for us,

* Rom viii. 15. † 1 St. John iv. 19. ‡ Psalm xvi. 11.

and by which he will be to us the resurrection and the life. Having then the express word of Jesus, and the experience of his Disciples in all ages, how can those who have come to a knowledge of themselves and who have found a new birth in Christ, be for a moment arrested in their progress "towards the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," by the paltry objections proposed by ignorance and self-conceit, against the great and only method of obtaining regeneration, holiness and salvation. Were you to ask a person who feels the sacred fire kindling within him, whether the doctrine of faith would weaken his motive to good works, he would answer you, "Do you suppose that the tree will remain barren or produce bitter fruits because it is grafted? That a spring will produce fetid waters because it has been purified?" The word faith signifies trust, and trust or confidence is universally acknowledged to be the foundation of affection and regard. O! which is the most worthy of God? To be served with the affection of a son who tenderly loves his father, or with the mercenary feelings of a hireling, who cares only for his pay, or with the servile fear of the slave, who has no interest beyond the dread of punishment. Faith, by uniting the soul to its God, clears the space which separates the finite from the infinite, the things that are temporal from those which are eternal. It is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen:" it seizes before hand on those things

* Heb. xi. 1.



which "† eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive." It gives us a foretaste of heaven, and though moving in this world, we may live for eternity. It reconciles us to the mortal changes, to which human nature is subject; by its power Death appears to us a deliverance, and the tomb a passage to eternal life. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." I love to repeat that it was standing by the side of the grave that Jesus spoke those words, and they were addressed to her whose brother had already lain four days in his sepulchre. Those who have preceded us to a better country are not dead; those whom you love in Christ will never die. The principle of a new life which faith has begun in them, is elevated above all mortal things, as the heavens are higher than the earth. Can it be called death to put away a gross and carnal body, the source of sufferings, sorrows, and sins? Is it death to be delivered from all the evils, which are the fruits of sin? No, all within us, that proceeds from the grace of God and faith, can never die. Is it death to see our faith changed in character, our hopes turned into reality, and our affections in full possession of their object? Is it death to have a distinct view in realms of glorious light of that sacred truth which we are here groping after through a mist of errors, ignorance and darkness? Is it death to be filled with that righteousness for which our hearts, in spite of their corruption, are thirsting? Is it death to

† 1 Cor. ii. 9.

enjoy that peace which we are looking for in vain among our errors and sorrows? Is it death to see face to face that Saviour God, whom we have loved, even when we have not seen him? Is it death to possess eternal life: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

In former times, the same faith produced the same life, and the same hopes. David's beloved child was seized with a dangerous illness. As proofs of his grief he clothed himself in sackcloth—lay down all night upon the earth—refused to take nourishment, and as the sacred historian says, " * It came to pass on the seventh day that the child died, and the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, behold while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice; how then will he vex himself if we tell him that the child is dead?" But when David heard it " † he rose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped." Then said his servants unto him, what thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive, but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said while the child was yet alive I fasted and wept, for I said who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live. But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him,

* 2 Sam. xli. 18. † 2 Sam. xli. 20, 21.

but he shall not return to me." What perfect resignation and what glorious fruits are in this instance produced by faith: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Oh! come to the source of living waters all ye who, like Lazarus' sisters, are mourning over the grave of some dear object, or perhaps may yourselves be anticipating your approaching end—come and drink of the spring of true comfort—come and quench, with refreshing draughts, that thirst for immortality that is devouring you, and making you shudder at the instability of all that is human. Come to Christ—listen to his heavenly voice—it is from his lips that flow the words of comfort, hope and life. He says to you, as he did to David, Martha and Mary, you weep at the death of one you love? But do not call death that which is the birth to another life. Do not grieve at the joy of him who has gone before you—all that are in the grave shall hear my voice; the much-loved eye that you have seen closed in death, will open again in perfect glory at the last day, when we shall meet to part no more; the lips which had always welcomed you with a smile, and which you have seen shaded by the pale hue of death, will again become animated and join you, (when you also shall be purified from sin) to sing the new song of eternal freedom. The hand which, after giving you a gentle pressure as a last farewell, fell lifeless and cold, will be raised with your own hands, and those of the

Royal Priesthood, in humble adoration towards the throne of the Almighty. They shall not return to us, but we shall go to them. Jesus is the resurrection and the life—" * O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Believest thou this?" Jesus, in the spirit of the tenderest charity, asked Lazarus' sister this question, in order that she might be assured she possessed the principle of eternal life. He implies that if you believe you will find at once in faith the balm for your extreme grief—your tears will be changed into thanksgivings. The darkness which envelops you will fade before this light of life—the pain of separation so full of despair to the incredulous and doubting, will be mitigated by the blessed hope of an eternal meeting.

Ye immortal beings, whom I am addressing, I ask you, as from God, do you believe this? Is Jesus to you the resurrection and the life? Can you apply these words with joy to yourselves, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." When contemplating the grave, which must shortly be dug for you, can you with confidence look above—can you look to that eternity which is the object and hope of the Lord's redeemed?

O may you all, and may we all, answer with as

* 1 Cor. xv. 55 and 57.

much faith as Martha did : “ Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world ”—should come down from Heaven to bring truth and life on earth. Error proceeds from earth, falsehood from hell, but thou Lord comest from “ * the bosom of the father, to reveal him to us.” “ † Thy word is truth.” I have never seen God, I have never seen Jesus, as Martha had, but I see man die, I see him borne to the grave—neither the soul of one of the Blessed, nor the Spirit of one of the condemned ever returned to me to bear witness of the truth of my Saviour’s words ; nevertheless I believe, “ I believe that thou art the Son of God, which should come into the world.” I know that an unbelieving world views my faith as foolishness, my hopes as ridiculous chimeras ; nevertheless, “ I believe, oh my Saviour ! ‡ that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.” I see a world which “ † lieth in wickedness,” abandoning itself to sin and pollution, as if there were neither death, nor judgment, resurrection nor life, but were the entire universe united against thy word and thy law, and “ § that it had killed thy prophets and digged down thy altars,” nevertheless, I would believe that thou art the Christ, and that thou art to me the resurrection and the life.

O my God ! since faith in thy atonement, is a free gift, grant it, I beseech thee, to us all, while it

* St. John i. 18. † St. John xvii. 17.

‡ 1 St. John v. 19. § Rom. xi. 3.

is yet time. Let all human beings feel the vanity of seeking happiness in temporal things, instead of going to thee who art the resurrection and the life. Above all, O Lord ! in all their trials, whether by unexpected death, or heart-rending separation, let them hear thy voice of love rising from the ruins of delusive happiness, which they had erected far from thee, and say to them in thy power, believest thou this ? Dost thou believe that I alone am the resurrection and the life ? Dost thou believe that, without me, there is nothing but sorrow, doubts, despair, and eternal death.

O Jesus ! how every thing in this life fades to nothing before the happiness of loving thee ! Let our hearts be consecrated to thee from the present moment. Our hearts are thine—they beat only for thee, and when we shall have nothing left but to draw our last breath upon thy bosom, oh ! may that breath waft to to the foot of thy eternal throne, this word of hope—
 “ * For me to live is Christ, to die is gain.—Amen,
 Lord Jesus ! Amen.

Phil. i. 21.

LECTURE IX.

JESUS WEPT.

And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, the Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, she goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping, which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. And said, where have ye laid him? they said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, behold how he loved him!—*St. John xi. 26, 28.*

The nearer this incident draws to its close the more lively is the interest we take in it. Our Lord's actions are so grand, so sublime, so far above the course of human events, that we expect its termination to accord with such surpassing greatness; and what may we not expect where Jesus is the life and soul of the action? He first comes before us with a majesty wholly divine—he appears among his followers as a sun diffusing light to surrounding worlds, and rendering them brilliant to our sight. Lazarus, Martha, Mary, Thomas, with the rest of the disciples look to Jesus, and communicate to him their thoughts, affections, prayers, and sorrows: all benefit by his light and his consolations. Should some of his words or actions have appeared dark and mysterious, we know that one word of his power could dissipate these clouds, shed torrents of light upon the obscure points of his conduct, and command equally our adoration and our surprise.

But our historian calls us to meditate at the tomb of Lazarus, before he shews us his beloved

master displaying the power of the great Creator by whom all things were made; he allows us to trace the feelings of his generous and compassionate heart, till he comes to a fact which speaks more than a thousand volumes, and calls forth tears of affection and gratitude in us all. "Jesus wept."

Martha, Mary, and Jesus will now successively engage our attention. Martha found her faith and hopes revive in the presence of him who called himself "the resurrection and the life." She had said, "yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."—And she thought within herself, "I see in thee the Messiah promised to Israel, the Deliverer, the Expectation of ages, the Desired of all nations; Him for whom all, who like Simeon and Anna, were waiting for the consolation of Israel, have been looking most anxiously." As soon as Martha discerned that Jesus was her Saviour, he seemed to her a most powerful comforter—her tears were dried—her confidence and peace returned with her faith, and she experienced the truth of our Lord's promise, joined to the following invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden: and I will give you rest, ye shall find rest unto your souls."

But Martha will not enjoy alone, these precious consolations. She did not forget that her sister "sat still in the house" absorbed in grief. She left Jesus

* St. Mathew xi. 28, 29.

for an instant, to fly to tell her the joyful news, that their heavenly friend was come. "She called Mary her sister secretly, saying, the Master is come and calleth for thee." Mary had shared her grief—Martha wished her to share her joy—they had wept together, it was natural that they should wish to rejoice together—they had drank of the same cup of grief, it was just they should taste together the sweetness of divine help. How beautiful, how engaging is this union of Christian souls, where joys and griefs, pleasures and pains, hopes and fears, are all felt in common. Far above all worldly feeling is that communion of souls which has a scrupulous delicacy of enjoying any thing unshared, and would feel jealous if any secret sorrow were concealed. It is only in the love of God and fellowship with Christ, that these feelings can exist—they are as sanctifying as they are soothing, and are alone deserving of the name of friendship: were they entirely submitted to the influence of the spirit of God, (and out of that spirit all seems vanity, idolatry, and sin,) what blessings might they not produce! Strangers and pilgrims as we are, what encouragement does it not give us to find here, faithful fellow-travellers in the Lord; let us fight as in lists which we must enter daily against sin, the world, and ourselves—how happy for us to find champions at our side, who will share our dangers, and by their words and example, encourage us to strive for victory.—What a blessing for us poor sinners to find a brotherly hand near us, stretched out to shew us our snares, and

ready to support and defend us. When Martha returned to the house she found Mary in the deepest affliction—she called her away secretly, that she might tell her the joyful news of her Lord's arrival. Though you should at all times be “* ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear,” yet there are many Christian experiences which none but the Disciples of Jesus can understand. Martha, notwithstanding the usual quickness of her impressions, felt that it was only to Mary, that she could open her heart, she alone being able to enter into her joyful hopes. The Jews, then assembled in the house, would have considered her love for Jesus as folly, her faith as fanaticism, her hopes as chimeras; besides, it is possible that our Lord's answer to her might have awakened in her some secret hope of beholding again, in this world, her much lamented brother: to whom then but Mary could she have breathed such hopes! This child of God would shrink from profaning her secret thoughts, by exposing them to the ridicule or sarcasm of unbelievers. “The Master is come,” said Martha, with the eager joy of one impatient to raise a drooping spirit by glad tidings. According to Martha's ideas these words were sufficient to relieve Mary of her sorrows. As if she had said to her, “We have indeed been afflicted—the sweet bond of our domestic circle has been dissevered—we have watched our dear Lazarus on his death bed, and have seen him carried to the grave—we have waited four days

* 1 Peter iii. 15.

for Jesus in vain—we have deplored his absence in bitter tears—but “the Master is come.” I have already experienced unspeakable joy in his presence—I have already felt a returning peace more precious than life itself. Nothing is impossible to him—he has told me he is “the resurrection and the life, and that he who believeth on him, though he were dead, yet shall he live;” he comes to comfort us—our sadness shall be changed into joy, our grief into thanksgivings. “The Master is come, and calleth for thee.”

He calleth for thee: Oh! how merciful of Jesus, thus to comfort the weeping Mary! He has not then forgotten her, she who had been so anxiously watching for him; she might have cried out in her anguish with the Psalmist, “* My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.” Now the hour of deliverance is come, Jesus is there—come himself to give her comfort—he will relieve her from the cross he had imposed on her for a time, and will pour into her lacerated feelings the healing balm of his consolations.

Oh! my beloved brethren! join me in adoring the love of the Saviour. He is always the same. Should you have an opportunity of administering comfort to a sufferer—either one afflicted by the death of friends, or perhaps some one in a state of despondence at his own guilt, do as Martha did to Mary, say “the Master is come and calleth for thee.” Your kind

* Psalm cxxx. 6.

Master, your merciful Saviour, your heavenly friend is near, when you think him far from you; he is there, he never forsakes you, but watches over you, willing to accept your first sigh of repentance, your first cry for help—ready to receive, to pardon and to bless you. “He calleth for you,” by ~~this~~ affliction perhaps, as well as by his blessed words; “he calleth for you,” that you may drink plenteously of the consolations of his grace. “He calleth for you” to speak to you of pardon, reconciliation, and peace.—“He calleth for you” that he may gather you into his sheepfold, and that rising above all doubts and despondency, you may be placed among his flock, his own redeemed, his dear children.

“He calleth for thee:” Oh! beware that ye turn not a deaf ear to that call! beware of imitating those miserable fools, whom he invited to the wedding supper, and who refused to come—do not say that you are not worthy, that you are too great a sinner. Why it is because you are a sinner, because you need a Saviour, because you are poor, blind, miserable and naked, that you ought to come to him, who “* though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” “† He cometh not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance:” his invitation is gratuitous—he bestows his favors freely. Oh Jesus! Oh my Saviour! I hear thy call—I will obey it—I will hasten as Mary did—I will fly to thee that

* 2 Cor. viii. 9. † St. Matt. ix. 13.

may have life. To whom else could I fly? Thou only hast the words of eternal life.

Mary was not at once raised to the same lively hopes as Martha—her grief lay too deep in her sensitive heart, but she hastened to answer the call of Jesus. The soul, when plunged in sorrow and doubt, can hardly understand the faithfulness and love of the Saviour—it makes an effort to rise and seeks God, groping as it were in the dark; but who could refuse the call of Jesus? One who has been told that “the Master is come and calleth for you,” already feels his deliverance is at hand. As a flower turns to the Sun, opening its blossom to its cheering rays—as the hart, dry and panting with the heat of the desert, hastens to the water-brooks—as the child bounds into the arms of its mother whom it had lost, so does the soul thirsting for peace and rest, open to the sweet influence of its Saviour’s love, and refreshes itself with long draughts of “* those living waters which spring up into everlasting life:” it throws itself with confidence into the arms of a heavenly father, with “† whom is plenteous redemption.” “As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came unto him.”

We have already remarked that according to St. Paul, “‡ the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God,” and the Jews who were with Mary confirmed this painful truth. What St. John tells us of them serves as a shade to the rest of the

* St. John iv. 14.

† Psalm cxxx. 7.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

picture—"The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, she goeth unto the grave to weep there."

It was, and is still, the custom in eastern countries to go frequently to the tomb of the deceased, during the first days of mourning, in order to weep there.

He who has not heard the call of our Lord, or who has closed his heart against it, knows not the unspeakable delight, it is to an afflicted soul, to throw itself at our Saviour's feet—to pour out its troubles to him in secret prayer, and cannot in the least comprehend the ways and feelings of the children of God: he supposes that a poor mourner can find no other relief than by indulging the melancholy privilege of weeping at the grave which has just closed over the object of his fondest hopes—he hovers round those dear remains with regrets that nothing seems to soften. The Jews mourned over the graves of their relations for seven successive days—we raise monuments to keep up a lasting memorial of our sorrows, and to conceal, if possible, that "all flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass."—Thus in our uncontrollable grief we seem attached to that which is already but dust, and sorrow as those that have no hope; and to delude their grief they call this idolatrous worship the religion of the tombs.—Alas! it would be more justly called the religion of despair, or the poetry of grief. No, Mary did not go

* 1 Peter i. 24.

to the grave. She knew that Jesus was come—she went to open her heart to him, as her sister had done and threw herself at his feet weeping : all that the bitterness of her grief enabled her to utter was “ Lord if thou hadst been here my brother had not died.” She forgot, in his presence, the crowd which surrounded her, nay, the universe and all it contained ; she had not strength to add as Martha had done, “ but I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God he will give it thee.” Her silence prevents us from penetrating into the secrets of her distracted mind—do her words imply that as her brother is dead every hope has forsaken her? Or does she think that Jesus is come to repair her loss? Does she suppose that death can put any bounds to the power of her divine friend? perhaps, full of resignation and confidence, it is enough for her to have disclosed to her Saviour the excess of her grief, and feel he was as much present with her, as he was on a former occasion, when she sat at his feet listening to his words. Does she now feel that his promises are realised, and is her faith as a light to lighten her darkness? We wish to imagine that it was so, and we like to indulge in the idea that she expected every thing from Jesus, and abandoned herself to his mercy. We like to see her expectations fulfilled, and that the love of her Saviour exceeded all that she could hope for.

Dear brethren, how delightful it is to us to know, that in all our trials, be they ever so great, if we have

but courage to throw ourselves at the feet of the High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, he is ready to receive us into his favor, and make us objects of his tender pity and infinite bounty. Never did the sigh of a broken and contrite spirit reach the throne of grace in vain. “ * This poor man cried, and the L^ord heard him, and saved him out of his trouble. O taste and see that the Lord is good : blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”

Mary's silence at the feet of Jesus is quite consistent with the rest of her character. Being more sensitive than Martha, her grief seemed more deeply seated—her emotions were buried in her bursting heart—she could not even in prayer address herself to our Lord, or say how she trusted in him—she remained at his feet silent—she could not exclaim, “ † We glory in tribulation, also knowing this, that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” We daily observe that those sensitive minds who, like Mary, place all their religion in feeling, have, notwithstanding the heartfelt enjoyment which the Gospel affords them, conflicts much more dreadful to bear than those who “ live by faith;” the path they tread is much more trying and dangerous. Their impressions are so easily awakened that every dis-

* Psalm xxxiv. 6, 8. † Romans v. 3, 4 and 5.

aster appears to wound the intensity of their feeling, and even attack the foundation of their faith. How necessary is it then, that by the word of God we should build our hopes of eternal salvation on the sure rock of the promises of God against which the waves and storms may exercise their fury, but they only break exhausted and expire powerless at its base. If through faith we stand firm on this rock of ages, should misty clouds so surround us that the light of Heaven should be hid from our sight, yet we shall firmly trust in the coming of the Almighty, and our hopes shall not be vain; let not then the assurance of our salvation depend upon the ever-varying changes in our own minds; if so, we should find our peace and hopes were at the mercy of the chances of this mortal life; we should live without the enjoyment of the presence of God; or of his pardon, his grace, or his adoption. It is not written, the just shall live by feeling, but “* the just shall live by faith.” God forbid that when we speak of faith, we should imply a mere barren conviction of Gospel truths which does not affect the heart, or a presumptuous assurance founded on some imaginative fancy. Faith which “† worketh not by love” is not faith, and “‡ he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.” But these are the rocks on which we constantly are thrown, and upon which many are shipwrecked. Happy the man who, in order to avoid both, remains like Mary at the feet of Jesus, listening to him in her hours of gladness, and returning to seek his aid in the day of trial.

* Habakkuk ii. 4.

† Gal. v. 6.

‡ 1 John iv. 8.

But to return to Jesus, we love to contemplate him in the midst of this heart-rending scene; he was not insensible to it; he saw Mary at his feet, overcome with grief, and deprived of all power but that of weeping bitterly. He saw a concourse of Jews, of whom some we wish to believe were real mourners, while others merely imitated Mary's sorrows, bewailing themselves according to the custom of their country. At this sight Jesus, who knew the secrets of all hearts, "groaned in his spirit and was troubled." What could be passing in his Almighty soul! What mortal could fathom his emotions! If we take the original word according to its strict meaning, we shall find that Jesus, beside the pain caused by this distressing scene, was impatient at the weakness, sins, and unbelief of those from whom he had most reason to expect confidence. It is as if he had said, Oh! faithless generation! how long must I abide with you; how long must I bear with you? Those very Jews who have been eye-witnesses of my works and constant hearers of my instructions, know not yet the true comfort for the afflicted. Even Mary, who has been so highly favored, says, in a despairing and almost reproachful tone, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died!" Oh ye weak in faith! what perverseness and distrust ye harbour within you, after a few days of trial and expectation, your belief seems vanished. How blind are the most enlightened! How weak the most zealous! How ungrateful the most attached!

May we not discern in the troubled mind of Jesus a sense of sorrow at the infirmities of human nature, of which he had such a picture before him? Was he not moved with indignation, and did he not “* put on the garments of vengeance” against him “† that had the power of death;” against him “‡ by whom sin entered into the world and death by sin?” He was going to fight a great fight as an everlasting manifestation that the powers of hell were subject to the Son of God, and that Satan should be bruised by the seed of the woman; or did our Lord only feel extreme pity for the afflicted sisters? The words of the original hardly sanction that idea, but be it as it may, we shall soon see that he was affected to tears, and whatever may have caused his trouble, he turned from this sad scene. Anxious to accomplish his work he asked for the remains of Lazarus, and at his grave proved to the whole world that nothing was impossible to him. “And said, where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.” Jesus had stopped with Martha to comfort her, cheer her, and reason with her, but he who knows the comfort best suited to each individual, being touched with pity at the intensity of Mary’s grief, sympathised and wept with her—he then asked for her brother’s grave, that he might, by his Almighty power, prove the fullness of his grace and love. It is only a person who really feels with the poor sufferer that can give comfort. Even worldly minded people have, to

* Isaiah lix. 17. † Heb. ii. 14. ‡ Rom. v. 12.

a certain degree, felt what a comforter ought to be. It has been said, "we console a person to whom we are indifferent, but we weep with those we love." The more we are animated by that true charity and love that filled our Saviour's merciful bosom, the more shall we be qualified to impart comfort to our fellow creatures. Jesus asked "where have ye laid him." While they were taking him to the sepulchre, his thoughts were fixed on Lazarus, the object of so much love, the cause of so much sorrow and tears. His heart was bursting with emotion at passing events. He who was God, and at the same time was called the most humane of men, could no longer refrain from tears—"Jesus wept."

"Jesus wept." Those blessed words must move the hardest heart, and strike the deepest chord that could vibrate within it. We may meditate but cannot discourse on those words—they seem to multiply our thoughts and feelings. Even the pen of St. John seemed incapable of adding anything thereto—he left those words as a meditation for succeeding ages.—Then, said the Jews, behold how he loved him," but they were as far as ourselves from understanding the tears of Jesus."

We may certainly exclaim, behold how he loved him, as St. John had told us before that Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus, and he who was so alive to human suffering, and felt pity at seeing the

multitude, “* knowing they were scattered, because they had no shepherd”—who, with his dying breath, prayed for his murderers, must certainly have felt deeply grieved at the woes of those favored by his peculiar love. We are then permitted to weep at our own sorrows and those of our near relations. Provided that God’s dispensations find our heart and will, subject to his dominion, an expression of grief, is not opposed to the character of the Christian. The Gospel is not founded on the doctrine of the Stoicks. Abraham wept at the tomb of Sarah, Jacob at the tomb of Rachel, David over Absalom, Jesus over Lazarus, so should our trials not weaken our faith, disturb our submission or dim our hopes, or diminish our love. We may allow our tears to flow, and our hearts to mourn. Men of the world may accuse us of weakness, and even some Christians may doubt the sincerity of our faith, but Jesus, who knows the heart, will not condemn us—in remembering his own tears he will feel for ours. “Jesus wept.”

What a striking example of the instability of all earthly joys was now before Jesus ! A few days before this house of mourning had been a mansion of peace and joy. Lazarus was the delight of his sisters. Mary, seated at the feet of Jesus, was eagerly listening to the words of eternal life which flowed from his lips : Martha was proving her love and veneration by the earnestness with which she served him ; all was content and repose ; and there Jesus and his Disciples

* Ezekiel xxxiv. 5.

sought a peaceful retreat. A few days after Lazarus is laid in his tomb, Mary, bathed in tears and clad in mourning, is prostrate at the feet of Jesus, and the Jews filled that once silent abode with cries and lamentations.

How difficult it is to engrave on our minds the sad truth, that all that we possess here is only lent to us, and that for a short time : to-morrow the object of our dearest affections may be a lifeless corpse, and all to whom we look for support or happiness, may be mixed with the dust of the earth. Disciples of Jesus, why will you make idols of those whom God confided to you as instruments of his glory ? When will you learn that this is not a place of rest ? When will you think, feel, and act as pilgrims and strangers, for whom there is but one thing needful, the attainment of a heavenly kingdom. And you men of the world, why will you “ * hew out broken cisterns that can hold no water ? ” Why do ye “ † sow the wind that ye may reap the whirlwind ? ” Why do you rest your happiness in that which may be scattered in a day as the chaff driven before the wind ? If Jesus shed tears of pity over guilty Jerusalem, and tears of love at his friend’s grave, what bitter tears may he not shed at your deplorable folly. Oh ! may his tears be a powerful admonition to you ! But the sublime thoughts of Jesus were not confined to these scenes of instability and grief. If the sight of a tomb prepared for its victim produces a shudder in the hearts of reflecting men, what must it not be to him who had created

* Jer. ii. 13. † Hosea viii. 7.

man in his own image and assigned him for his dwelling, not a dark cold grave, but the delicious garden of Eden—what a contrast must Jesus see between this scene of death and that when he saw Man first spring from his creating hand pure, happy, and living a life of bliss and love? Could he recognise his own work? With what regret must he view the ravages of sin which polluted and even consigned to death the creature he had formed. If every funeral that passes through our streets, says to the awakened christian, “Man is guilty,” what must the just and holy Jesus have felt at the tomb of Lazarus? What millions of creatures, from generation to generation, (notwithstanding the tears of their friends) expire amidst cries of agony, and are swallowed up in the pit which sin has dug for them, while they say to those who have ears to hear—“Man is fallen.”

If an indiffererent person cannot see, without regret, the ruins of a majestic building just blown down by a storm, what then must the artist feel, whose genius had planned and whose care had constructed it? If we, creatures of a day, born in sorrow, reared among “* briars and thorns,” inhabiting a world cursed by sin, tremble at the sight of death, what must he have endured who came down from the Father from heaven, the seat of peace, sanctity and joy—“Jesus wept.” But, oh! my dear brethren, my companions in exile and sorrow, let the tears of Jesus, far from grieving us, be the source of the most precious con-

* Isaiah v. 6.

solutions : he wept for our misery, and came to deliver us from it. Our woes moved his pity, and he came to remove their sting. If he wept at the instability of all that is human, he destroyed him “that had the power of death.” If he wept at the ravages of sin, did he not die that he might wipe away its stain? Oh! may these compassionate tears of our Saviour flow for our trials, sweeten their bitterness, and heal our wounds—we have seen that we have not “a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” Miserable sinners as we are, let us take courage, let us go to our merciful Saviour—we need not fear to be rejected, his tears are proofs of love. The Jews exclaimed “behold how he loved him,”—let us say, behold how he loves us: he is ever the same, though no longer present to our sight, yet he is at the right hand of his father, pleading our cause, interceding for us, and obtaining the remission of our sins—he knows what are our temptations and our frailties—Bethany still lives in his memory, and the unfortunate in his heart; let us therefore “* come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need,”—let us love the Saviour who first loved us; let us consecrate our hearts to him who has many claims on them. Oh Jesus! thou seest that I wish to love thee—would that I could say with one of thy servants “† there is none upon earth I desire besides thee.”^a

* Heb. iv. 16. † Psalm lxxii. 25.

LECTURE X.

LAZARUS COME FORTH.

And some of them said, could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe thou shouldst see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid—and Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

St. John, xi. 37, 44.

The part which man plays in the Drama of life finishes with his existence: all that history can record even of the greatest and most powerful is merely earthly, and dies with him, his name alone excepted. That endures for a certain time, like the light track of a vessel which may be traced from wave to wave, and is then lost in vastness. Man's power lasts but with his life; at his death he restores to earth what he had received from it, and all is finished. Those who write his history record his actions, decide on his character, and on the influence (bad or good) he had used in his time: their task is then done—and this is equally the fate of the hero celebrated for his achievements as of the poor sufferer remarkable only for his sorrows. Why then does the narrative before us assume a character of greater sublimity, and interest, at the sepulchre of Lazarus, who was the principal hero of the story? Why instead of laying down his pen at the grave and dropping a tear to his memory,

does St. John awaken our attention and try to engage our admiration by what follows ? Because here there is one more than mortal. The Prince of Life is here represented to us, he who by the power given him in heaven and on earth, can tread under his feet the dark dominion of death and the bounds of human power : it is Jesus, the Lord of glory, who is working this work and what obstacle could the grave present to him ? Let us assemble as it were in his divine presence and humble ourselves before his omnipotence.

Jesus had inquired where they had laid him—he approached the place of death in tears. Alas ! those around him were ill calculated to afford him comfort ; he saw near him Mary weeping and the Jews who had so often witnessed his miraculous works drawing from those very works arguments in support of their unbelief—they asked with some anxiety and distrust, “ Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind have caused that even this man should not have died ? ” What strange reasoning ! we should have supposed they would have drawn a totally opposite conclusion, and have said, he that has opened the eyes of a man born blind, and thus proved his power to be divine, could, if it had pleased him, order that this man should not die, and doubtless even now could recall him to life. No, the carnal man does not reason thus ; he does not infer God’s perfections one from the other ; his power from his love ; his love from his infinite bounty—he must be told one by one

all the consequences of the favor which his God has deigned to shew him, and if he should not at once be able to comprehend the dispensation of eternal wisdom towards him, he draws this ungrateful conclusion, "there is nothing new under the Sun." This logic of unbelief is found in our hearts, and on our lips, even after the innumerable favors we have received from the Lord; and we fall into mistrust, forgetful of his gifts and promises, if we be left but one day in trouble. Thus did the Disciples reason on their way to Emmaus, " * Jesus of Nazareth, was a Prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and the people: ~~we~~ trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done." The resuscitated Saviour, said unto them, " O ! fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken."

However, Jesus did not pause to reason with them; he groaned in himself at all that was passing around him. But he cometh to the grave that he may confound their unbelief; and he comforted those he loved, by granting them more than they asked or hoped for. Do we then need such miraculous favours in order to convince us of God's love? Oh ! ye disciples of Jesus, who like Martha and Mary are lamenting departed friends, your Almighty Redeemer can and will accompany you to their graves, and sympathise with your sorrows. He knows how to provide you comfort even

* St. Luke xxiv. 19 and 21, and 25.

from the tomb, not by restoring to you in this world those you have lost, but by showing you by means of faith, that glorious day when you will meet for ever pure, holy, and blessed. The dust which conceals their mortal remains from your sight and preserves the seed of their glorious resurrection, can no more separate them from God and you than could the heavy stone at the entrance of the cave where Lazarus lay, prove a barrier between him and the power of Jesus. The Saviour's love is like his power, it is unbounded.

“It was a cave and a stone lay upon it,” or as it might be translated, there was a stone at the mouth of the cave. According to the custom of the country, the cave was hewn out of the rock, from whence you descended a few steps of a narrow staircase.—The unbelieving Jews, and even, perhaps, Lazarus' sisters, wondered within themselves what could be his purpose—did he go to weep there, or did he wish for the sad consolation of seeing where his friend's body was deposited—did he wish to bid him a last adieu! to shew the sympathy and regret he felt for his death? The curiosity which these thoughts excited, was rendered still more intense by the solemn command of Jesus—“Take ye away the stone.”—What a moment of expectation and anxiety for the sisters? What could be the intention of Jesus?—Martha, who while they were removing the stone, thought of the state of corruption to which a body is subject some days after dissolution, shuddered at the idea. The violence of her emotions overcame her;

the secret hope she had nourished forsook her ; she even appeared to beseech the Lord to leave in peace the lifeless body : “ Lord, said she, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days.” Four days only have elapsed since she had pressed to her bosom her beloved brother, since he could reply to her affection, since she watched his last look, and received his last adieu : and already he was a mass of corruption. Oh, the vanity of all that is human ! Oh, the dreadful curse of sin ! “ * Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.” Ye children of vanity ! is it to this perishable body, to this particle of clay, to which you devote your time, your talents, your fortune, and your life ? Do ye not know that you have an *immortal* soul ? How long will you neglect it, and sacrifice it for the sake of a body which in four days may be the food of worms.

Martha's words afford us another lesson. Men of science have decided, that the only certain sign of death is the decay of the body. To those unbelievers who foolishly seek in religious truth for mathematical certainties, it was necessary to have this convincing proof—they then could have no possible excuse for doubting the truth of the miracle he was about to work ; it was necessary that if they rejected the divinity of his mission, the responsibility of their unbelief should rest on their own guilty heads, and that God should do all to convince and save, that he may be just when he condemns. Spinoza, a cele-

* Gen. iii. 19.

brated author of that school, said, "could he have persuaded himself of the truth of the resurrection of Lazarus, he would have rejected his own system, and have embraced without difficulty the Christian faith." We do not credit him—his understanding could not doubt, but his heart refused to believe. "• ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Jesus seeing Mary overwhelmed with grief, did not reason with her, knowing the comfort best suited to her—he wept with *her*, but he paused to strengthen Martha's sinking faith. "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God!" How often might our merciful Saviour address these reproachful words to us "said I not unto thee?" When in our affliction we do not look to Jesus for succour and submission, when our heart, oppressed with sorrow and wasted with doubts, loses its faith and sees no hope, when by the darkness that surrounds us we can no longer raise our eyes above and see the spangled heaven, but yielding to our difficulties, are ready to say with Martha, "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." All is then lost, there is no hope on earth—where are the promises made by God? Must Jesus reproach us after all the pity and mercy he has shewn us with these words, "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the kingdom of God?" In the despondency of your heart, and not discerning the dispensations of my wisdom, a prey to your own sorrow,

• St. John 7. 40.

you are ready to sink with despair. Have I not told you that “* all things work together for good to them that love God ?” Under this impression of your weakness, you have power only to lament that you cannot walk in my ways—you doubt that I am your Saviour—you feel that your love for me is weak, and doubt that you are mine, that I have bought you with a price, and that you are a child of God. Have I not told you that “ † whosoever believeth in the Son should not perish but have everlasting life ;” that “ ‡ by grace ye are saved,” that “ § the gift of God is eternal life,” that “ || the bruised reed I will not break, and the smoking flax will I not quench,” and that “ ¶ as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” Believe and thou shalt see the glory of God—his glory ought to be the sole object of your existence, even in the midst of your sufferings, when perhaps you are only seeking personal ease and temporal welfare. When the aged man, whose strength is weakness, whose wisdom is folly, with all his doubts and difficulties, fears and troubles, keeps silence, and in the repose of his mind, faith piercing through the darkness, he sees the light of heaven ; when hope spreading her wings, shakes off the dust of the earth, and soars far above all mortal things ; when the heart awakening to love, springs up towards its Redeemer ; towards him, whom not having seen he loves, when Mary’s cry, *Rabboni, Master*, escapes from his lips, or perhaps the words

* Rom. viii. 28. † St. John iii. 15. ‡ Eph. ii. 5.
§ Rom. vi. 23. || Isaiah xlii. 3. ¶ Psalm ciii. 13.

of Thomas “ * My Lord and my God,” when a feeling of veneration fills us with the eternal Majesty of God; then the Spirit of the Most High (that Spirit that conducting Ezekiel to the Desert, showed him in dry bones the Glory of God,) worketh within us, we then believe in, we behold the Glory of God, the glory of God in the midst of trials, the Glory of God at the verge of the tomb.

However, the stone was removed and the corpse of Lazarus, laid in its cold bed and wrapped in its shroud, is visible to all. Oh! what a sight! what shudderings, fear, surprise, horror, expectations, and secret hope alternately seized on the minds of the spectators, varying according to the faith or unbelief each individually felt. A mournful silence reigned around as if spectres had arisen from this abode of death, and frozen all their faculties—they hardly dared to take their eyes off the dead, even to try and read in our Lord’s countenance what his intentions were. The Prince of Life alone is filled with that Spirit which “ † calleth those things that be not as if they were.” He advanced with majestic step to the side of the tomb—he paused, lifted up his eyes—he did not wish that the thoughts and looks of those present should dwell on the sad relics of death and decay—“ he lifted up his eyes.” This implied that they should look neither for relief or comfort here below, “ ‡ that they must lift up their eyes to the hills from whence

* St. John xx. 28. † Rom. iv. 17. ‡ Psalm cxxi. 1.

cometh their help." That "• they mustnot seek the living among the dead;" but that each spirit should wing its way, mounted on the wings of faith, and soar far above death and the grave, this world and themselves. Why, when in trouble, do we seem to fall upon ourselves with all the weight of our sufferings? Why are our minds wrapped up in our grief as it were in a dark cloud. Alas! the truth is, that being carnal minded, we know not how to lift our eyes as Jesus did, to heaven, from whence we should derive faith, hope, and comfort. Teach us, O Lord! how to raise our looks and thoughts, affections and prayers, to the Throne of Mercy. Jesus desired, by directing their eyes to heaven, to shew them before hand the infinite power by which he was going to work this great miracle. He wished to leave no shade of doubt on the subject—he wished to make it a holy work, and that it could be attributed to none other but God. He had foretold that the illness of Lazarus was to be "for the glory of God," and thus these words were fulfilled—and that no one might take from God the glory which was due to him, he shewed them first the powerful arm that ordained the work.

"Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." This was said before Jesus had seen his prayer granted. Lazarus was still lying in the tomb, in a state of dissolution, no spark of life had as yet kindled in his bosom, those around him beheld only his stiffened and corrupt corpse.

• St. Luke xxiv. 5.

My dear friends, this is faith, this is prayer, this is trust in the promises of God, and one of his promises, where true faith is, amounts to a gift. A prayer offered up in “ * the spirit of supplication,” is a prayer granted. Jesus prayed within him as he drew near to the grave of Lazarus, and he felt that prayer was granted—he knew that Lazarus had revived; that his sisters were comforted; that the faith of his Disciples was established; that God was glorified; that the Son of Man was glorified. Oh! how different would our prayers be if we received the promises of God as gifts already bestowed. It is by this spirit that the Apostle Paul saw, as well for himself as for the believers whom he addressed, that all difficulties were overcome, all temptations conquered, all conflicts victoriously ended, and souls purified from sin, when he exclaimed triumphantly “ † We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” Passing over life and death, he says again, “ † He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Embracing by faith all the gifts of God promised to us, he thus speaks to the Disciples at Corinth, “ || Whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are your’s, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. “ I thank thee,” said Jesus before his prayer was visibly granted—but, alas! with what difficulty do our cold hearts return thanks to heaven even after our desires are obtained :

* Zechariah xli. 10. † Rom. viii. 27.

† Eph. ii. 6. || 1 Cor. iii. 22.

thankless, faithless, cold-hearted generation—"and I knew, " added Jesus, " that thou hearest me always, but because of the people who stood by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." Could any one avoid discerning in this familiar language, Him, who was one with the Father, who from all eternity held counsel with him, " * who was in the beginning with God, and who was God." " I knew that thou hearest me always." How could it be otherwise? Had not the Father announced him to the world in these words, " † This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Who does not see, in the anxious care he takes of his surrounding flock, the good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, and wandered over mountains and valleys, in search of one that was lost. Oh, my brethren ! if hitherto you have felt distrust in your prayers, take courage now. Jesus is always the same—to-day, as in the days of his appearing in the flesh—before the throne of God, as at the grave of Lazarus. He says to his father, when interceding for us, words as full of faith as these, " I knew that thou hearest me always. As our Sovereign High Priest, he offers to God our humble prayers purified from sin, and kindling with a sacred flame, and, oh ! what a delightful thought is that comforting assurance that " God always hears him."

The prayer of Jesus recalled those present to a sense of recollection from which the terrific sight of death had affrighted them ; their minds were pre-

* St. John i. 2 and 4. † Matt. iii. 17,

pared thus to witness this greatest of all miracles.—Nothing was wanting but the command of an Almighty Power : the God man is about to pronounce it, “ And when he had thus spoken he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth.” Oh ! what surprise and terror were caused by these words ! they pierced to the very souls of all present, and restored the life-blood to the heart of the dead—the bonds of the sepulchre are broken—death acknowledging itself vanquished, gave back its victim at the voice of Jesus—the beholders see the stiff and lifeless limbs of Lazarus restored to the power of motion, he rises, he comes forth, wrapped in his shroud, and, Oh ! how wonderful ! “ he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin.” All present were speechless with terror and surprise ; Martha and Mary hardly dared to embrace their brother, they could not believe the evidence of their senses ; doubts and fears silenced even their love—it seemed as if death, to avenge its overthrow, had seized on them all. Jesus alone broke silence. With calmness and majesty “ he saith unto them, loose him and let him go.”

Well do I here recognise the all-powerful voice which said in the beginning “ * let there be light and there was light.” Yes, I know it well—it is the voice which “ † calleth those things which be not as though they were ;” it is the voice which restoreth the dead

* Gen. i. 3. † Rom. iv. 17. |

to life. Let us kneel before thee our God and Saviour, Lord of all, eternally blessed. “* Oh, Lord God of Hosts! who is a strong Lord like unto thee?”—What God is there in heaven and on earth that can do according to thy works and according to thy might? The grave gives up its dead at thy command. Corruption flies from thy presence. How blessed are we that our eternal destiny is in thy hands! If thou lovest us, if we are thy redeemed, if thou art on our side, who can be against us? What can we fear? Not death, for before thee “† death is swallowed up in victory,” nor the grave, for “‡ at thy voice we shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself:” “§ for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die we are the Lord’s.” “We praise thee, O God! out of the depths; do we cry unto thee.” “|| We shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness and shall sing of thy righteousness.” “¶ My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever.”

My dear brethren, shall I describe to you the transports of joy and gratitude felt by the sisters of Lazarus, first pressing their brother to their bosoms with tears of joy, then overcome by extreme thank-

* Psal. lxxxix. 8. † 1 Cor. xv. 54. ‡ Phil. iii. 21.

§ Rom. xiv. 8. || Psalm cxlv. 7. ¶ Psalm cxlv. 21.

fulness, prostrating themselves at the feet of Jesus—shall I picture to you this happy family restored to their former domestic bliss, and more warmly devoted than ever to the Author of their happiness—shall I tell you of the lessons the sisters had learned during their trials ; lessons of faith, gratitude, and holy love, a thousand times more precious than even the restoration of their brother—shall I shew you this peaceful circle surrounding Jesus, six days before the Passover, that is, before his death—Mary anxiously seizing the first opportunity that offered, of testifying publicly her gratitude and love, by paying her Saviour the public homage due to him as her Lord and her King, having witnessed his Majesty at her brother's grave—shall I shew you Martha, serving him joyfully as in her former days of prosperity ; Lazarus sitting at table with his heavenly Saviour, a living testimony, by his resurrection, of that Saviour's power and divinity. What a picture, what a conclusion to so much sorrow. Jesus is there to comfort them. Shall I describe the inward thoughts of the Disciples, for whose sake Jesus desired to give this undeniable proof of his Divinity, having said “ I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe ?”

No ; however interesting such meditations may be, we will not dwell on them, but leave them for your private reflections, and turn to what more immediately concerns ourselves, and the resurrection of

Lazarus does indeed concern us—his rising from the grave at the voice of Jesus, is to us the source of great comfort, of powerful encouragement and salutary instruction. Yet a little while and the omnipotent voice which was heard in Bethany, will resound throughout the Heavens with the sound of a trumpet, and we, whatever we may be, shall all rise from our graves, as Lazarus did rise, and as all succeeding generations shall rise! Oh, what an appalling moment! What a scene of terror! Blessed then will be the friends of Jesus, the Lazaruses, Marthas, Marys, &c. who will meet in ecstasies of joy those they had loved in God on earth, whose death they had bitterly lamented, and to whom they will be united for ever; where “* there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain,” because there is no more sin. The joy felt by the family of Bethany was only a foretaste of eternal happiness; but, alas! they were still among the contentions and trials of this world, and, after a few short years of union, must again be separated by death. If we belong to Jesus, who is the “resurrection and the life,” may his almighty power and love be to us as a strong hold and refuge, our tower of safety. Let nothing discourage us. Let us pass through time and death by the “† hope which maketh not ashamed.” Let us realise by immovable faith, the glorious promises of our Saviour and God, and the rapture of beholding him face to face: he has loved us so truly,

* Rev. xxi. 4.

† Rom. v. 5.

has wept over our sorrow, and desired that where he is, there should we be also. Let us appropriate to ourselves the tender pity he felt for his friends at Bethany, and may the tears he there shed, be shed for us when our hearts are bleeding from the stings of death. When we hear that he called Lazarus from his tomb, let us remember that for our sakes he overcame the world, the Devil, and the grave—that henceforth in all these things, “† we are more than conquerors in him who loved us.”

I had intended to close this lecture here, but, oh! shall I own to you that in spite of all our late cheering thoughts, a reluctant and secret fear steals over me. I must impart it to you, though were it indulged it would thrill us with horror. I fancy to myself the solemn moment, when at the voice of him who “§ raiseth the dead,” we who are now assembled in this Church shall rise from our tombs, shall see each other, shall know each other, as Lazarus and his sisters did, and joyfully embrace each other in the presence of Jesus—and then, in that awful moment, when our eternal fate is sealed, if it should be discovered that some among you, or even one of you, now before me, did not belong to Jesus, had not received from him the pardon that gives life, but was sinking under the weight of the condemnation of sin, deceived by vain illusions, and an outward semblance of Christianity; in one word, were without a Saviour, without a hope, having, in fact, “|| neither part or lot in the matter.” Oh what agony and despair! We

† Rom. viii. 37.

§ 2 Cor. i. 9.

|| Acts viii. 24.

cannot even for a moment bear the dread idea. It overwhelms us like the rocks and hills, which the wicked will vainly implore to cover them from the anger of God. Oh ye immortal and responsible beings! we earnestly conjure you, for the sake of God's mercy, to avert from us and yourselves this grievous thought, by hastening to Golgotha this very day, aye, this very hour, and by seeking there your refuge at the foot of the cross of Christ, being sprinkled and purified by the blood of the new Covenant. If among your relations and friends there should be one dear to you, who does not yet know the Saviour, who has not called upon the only name by which he can be saved—I entreat you to supplicate your Redeemer, that he will touch his heart, and snatch it from certain destruction, “* as the brand which is plucked out of the fire”—that He will save him as it were in spite of himself, while salvation, pardon, and reconciliation are within his reach.—O God! should there be one among those now listening to thy word, and hearing of thy bounty and love, or one whom I have known and cherished on earth, who at the last great day will be an example of thy justice, instead of a monument of thy grace and everlasting love—let me beseech thee, if ever thou hast listened to prayer, or been moved to relent by earnest supplications, or the cries of an agonised spirit, that thou wouldst lighten me of this awful burden, and drive from my heart this sad anticipation and fear. I must, I will hope. Oh! forgive me:

* Zech. iii. 2.

Lord, thou wilt not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live, and “* all things are possible unto thee.”

LECTURE XI.

THE EFFECTS OF THE MIRACLE.

Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a Council, and said, What do we ? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him : and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them named Caiphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all. Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself : but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation ; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”—*St. John xi. 45—52.*

If there be one prophecy more than another, whose fulfilment has been peculiarly attested as clear and undeniable, by all people from the days of Jesus Christ even to our day, it is that which was spoken by Simeon in the temple of Jerusalem—he held in his aged arms, the child in whom he saw the consolation of Israel, the desired of all nations, saying “† Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel : and for a sign which shall be spoken against.” This prophecy was in fact accomplished during the ministry of Jesus ; it was accomplished at the tomb of Lazarus. Some believed on him, while others went to rouse the enmity of the Phari-

* St. Mark xiv. 36. † St. Luke ii. 34.

sees : it was accomplished at his death, when some cried “ * crucify him, his blood be on us and our children ;” but future ages were to see in the cross and blood of the new Covenant the sign of their eternal salvation. It was accomplished in the first preaching of the Apostles, who were “ † beaten with rods,” by some persons, while thousands of others were converted to eternal life. It has been accomplished for eighteen hundred years wherever the Gospel of Christ has been preached, which to “ ‡ some was the savour of death unto death, and for others the savour of life unto life, “ § and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” It is accomplished in our days, when the doctrine of the cross excites hatred and persecutions, at the same time that it gives joy, peace, and life to all true believers.

Let the enemies of the Gospel know that by their enmity and anger they are unconsciously working a work they do not intend : they are living testimonies of the truth of the very doctrines they are trying to overthrow—they establish our faith most firmly in the crucified Saviour—they are building up an edifice, of which they are trying to shake the very foundations—they have the misfortune to be the blind instruments which God makes use of against their will, in order to establish a kingdom, of which they can never be citizens—they are like the strange workmen in Israel, who prepared, with immense labour, the ma-

* St. Matt. xxvii, 25. † 2 Cor. xi. 25. ‡ 2 Cor. ii. 16. § Rom. i. 16.

terials of a magnificent temple, into which they would never be permitted to enter.

The first object of the miracle was answered to the family of Bethany by their receiving comfort, and coming out of their trials, full of joy, confidence, and love. It was answered to the Disciples who saw therein the Glory of God; it was answered also to many of the Jews who, when they had seen the things that Jesus did, believed on him; but was it attained by the rest of the by-standers? Was it attained by the Chief Priests and Pharisees: Alas! it was, but according to the sense of Simeon's fatal prophecy.

“Then many of the Jews who came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.” They had simple and upright hearts prepared by the Grace of God: it was natural for any one to conclude, from the greatness of the miracle, what must have been the wonderful power of him who worked it. They were eye-witnesses of this manifestation of his Omnipotence—they had the advantage of concluding that such power could only be given to the Christ, the promised Messiah, the deliverer spoken of by the Prophets. They saw with their eyes and believed in their hearts. We must not suppose that their faith was suddenly enlightened, by a knowledge of the whole truth, which Jesus brought into the world: yet, from the time that they believed in his divinity, their hearts were willing to receive with submission

and perfect confidence every word that fell from the lips of this Ambassador from the Most High. The end of Jesus was attained, "because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." Miracles alone do not make converts ; but they dispose the heart by faith to conversion and life. Nicodemus believed the miracles of Jesus—he saw in them a proof of his Divinity. " * Rabbi," said he, " we know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." However Nicodemus, notwithstanding this portion of faith, and his being a ruler of the Jews, was ignorant of the first principles of the doctrine of regeneration ; but moved by the faith within him, went to Jesus to be instructed in the knowledge of salvation, which he felt disposed to receive. This is but the first step, but it infallibly leads to something better, and on that account St. John left us minute details of this most affecting story—and to those who read the resurrection of Lazarus with attention, the evidence is as powerful as it was to those who, like St. John, were eye-witnesses of it.

" Is this the Saviour the Gospel promises me ?"—This is a natural question to any one anxiously seeking the truth. I will resign my whole soul to such a master, such a Saviour. I know that in following him I cannot walk in darkness ; I will study line by line the words of eternal truth which he brought us

• St. John iii. 2.

from heaven. I know that this word is a sure guide. I will meditate on it with perfect confidence. I acknowledge its author, as my Teacher, my King, and my Redeemer. A mind thus disposed will soon discover that the doctrine and “* word of God is sweeter to his taste, yea, sweeter than honey to his mouth.” From belief in the miracle he will attain the faith of experience, and will soon discern more divinity in one line of the blessed word, than the Jews could who were present at the resurrection of Lazarus.—Miracles ought to occupy this important and useful situation in divine economy; we are fully convinced that those who expect the renewal of miracles in the Church before it can reach its promised glory, make as it were a retrograde motion; they go down again to the lowest step instead of rising like the Angels on Jacob’s ladder to the contemplation of the heavens: they wish to retrace their steps and draw others to the faith of Nicodemus, faith produced by a miracle, and which can exist without the love of God, or the new birth: it sets us forward, but does not raise us, by a living and true faith, to the regions of spirituality, and christian life. They desire the milk fit for babes instead of “the strong meat which belongeth to them that are of full age.” “† God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.” Now he that dwelleth in God by love, what need hath he of a visible manifestation of the power and love of God? Which was nearest to Jesus, St. John leaning with

* Psalm cxix. 103. † Heb. v. 14.

confidence on his bosom, or the crowd who earnestly besought him for miracles? Jesus answered them, “* A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas, and he left them, and departed.”

However, Jesus, in his infinite condescension, often made use of miracles to draw towards him the frivolous hearts of a sinful and adulterous generation, and notwithstanding what we have said, we are far from agreeing with some persons who imagine that miracles having once ceased, they cannot be renewed in the Church; we will not, however, dwell on this subject, but consider how the rest of the Jews in Bethany profited by the greatest miracle ever worked before man. Alas! what would the Disciples and the sisters have said, if in the midst of their joy, and the first transport of their love, they had been told, that this prodigious work, the resurrection of Lazarus, should be the secondary cause of the sufferings and death of the most holy, the most just.—Could they have believed it possible? Yet it was so. What mystery is there in such hard-heartedness and iniquity. “† The Disciple whom Jesus loved,” now proceeds to shew us, in most affecting words, the love and compassion of his Master—how could his pen disclose to us such scenes of wickedness? but it is meet and right that we should know “‡ that every one who loveth is born of God,” and that “§ the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

* 1 St. John iv. 16.

† St. John xx. 2.

‡ 1 St. John iv. 7. || 1 St. John v. 19.

“ But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what Jesus had done.” What! they had come to Bethany to console Martha and Mary; they had witnessed their sorrows; they had seen their heavenly friend approach the tomb in tears; they had watched his majestic look turned to heaven; had heard his prayers; had heard his almighty voice pronounce the words, “ Lazarus come forth ;” had seen the dead rise from the grave, and then the raptures of joy and thankfulness that followed; and instead of discerning therein the glory of God, and throwing themselves at the feet of Jesus, they went their ways to warn the Pharisees, his bitter enemies, of what had occurred. Such is man, such he is, and such he will ever be, while he abandons himself to his natural depravity of heart, and enmity to God. How then can you say that he is naturally good; that he loves truth; that he is prone to believe. I could more easily believe you if you told me the rock yielded to the waves, which for centuries had been foaming and exhausting themselves at its base. If the overpowering evidence manifested at the tomb of Lazarus were not a convincing proof of the love of Jesus, and could not touch man’s heart and tame his hatred, (pardon this expression), you may seek among your worldly systems of religion and morality, for more powerful means in order to prove to us the natural goodness of the heart of man, but rather let me beseech you to acknowledge that there is no other power but the Grace of God, capable of convincing

or moving, or changing the human heart. Do not allege, that if revelation contained stronger proofs, and that there were fewer things in it above man's comprehension, that he would more readily believe. No, the Jews who continued incredulous, and even enemies of Jesus, at the tomb of Lazarus, bear insurmountable testimony against this argument, and furnish us with an effective commentary on these words of Jesus, " * If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Do you wish for further proof? The Chief Priests and Pharisees will afford you one.

" Then the Chief Priests and the Pharisees, having heard the report made by some who had witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus, gathered a Council to deliberate on this important affair. These Chief Priests, ministers of religion, were men to whom God had allotted the part of labouring for his glory, and the advancement of his kingdom; and who, when they became acquainted with the truth, ought to have spread it, by every means in their power and at any personal risk whatever. How did they fulfil these sacred obligations? They asked each other, " What do we?" Besides the knowledge of their duty as Ministers of God, they cannot now be in error or ever doubt; they are persuaded of the truth of the miracles worked by Jesus—they avow it, " For this man doeth many miracles." This knowledge was a precious talent confided to them of which they will

* St. Luke xvi. 31.

have to give a fearful account in the day of judgment. Now, with so much light and conviction, had they among them a Gamaliel, who had the boldness to raise his voice in the cause of truth and justice. Was there among this ecclesiastical body “† an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile,” who will have courage to say, “this man doeth many miracles, he must then come from God—we ought to listen to him, and humbly submit ourselves to his doctrine.” No, on the contrary, all in this Council were puffed up with passion, self-sufficiency and pride. Idolators of themselves, full of vanity, proud of their influence and money, they had not the Glory of God before their eyes: therefore what could be expected from them more than from any one whose heart has not been renewed and sanctified? You cannot say that in this instance we take our example of the wickedness of the human heart, from the depraved classes of society; on the contrary, they were the most enlightened of the people, whose education was peculiarly calculated to develop their moral sense; in fact they were ministers of religion. Let us attend, and seek for those sentiments of probity, justice and virtue, which you suppose to be natural to man. Let us examine how they answer this simple question, “What do we?”

“If we let him alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our name and nation.” “If we let him alone.” Thus from the first, the question was not, whether he came

† St. John i. 47.

from God, whether he preached the truth, or whether he was the true Messiah promised to Israel—the question of truth and justice seems wholly discarded; all they desire is, not to “let him alone,” but by main force to restrain and condemn him. What depth of iniquity! What fearful depravity was this! What inconceivable contempt for the fairest and simplest principles of justice and virtue. This alone conveys to us an idea of the corruption which filled the minds of these judges in Israel, those false prophets, “* ye have taken away the key of knowledge, ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.” “If we let him alone.” Oh ye fools! ye worms of the earth! in your wretched pride ye are discussing whether you will let alone HIM, who came to overcome death and the grave—who came to reveal to us, a power truly divine—who created worlds, and by one word could reduce you to the nothingness from which he took you. Such deplorable blindness and rage seem always to accompany an enmity towards God, and we see in our days as in the days of Christ, “† the great men of the earth,” the Chief Priests and Pharisees, “‡ taking counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed,” against the eternal truth of God, which according to promise, is to reign over the whole universe. There is nothing new under the Sun, and since Christ himself, and the servants and disciples that followed him through succeeding ages, have met bitter enemies in those who

* St. Luke xi. 52.

† Rev. xviii. 23.

‡ Psalm ii. 2.

by their vocation should have been zealous friends, how can the faithful witnesses of the truth in our days be astonished at meeting enmity and persecutions in the name of religion and the church? We may be grieved at this, but not astonished; we may suffer by it, but should not cease to invoke him who has power “ \S to open the eyes of the blind.”

But let us proceed to the arguments of the Chief Priests, for it was necessary they should have some arguments in excuse for their conduct:

“If we let him alone all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.” These are two very powerful reasons, two very conclusive considerations; first, all men will believe in him: secondly, the Romans shall come: but not a word of condemnation against Jesus—they had no principle of action; their reasons were founded on imaginary consequences—however, it was necessary to condemn him, or all men would believe on him. What a testimony is this of the force of the truth as spoken by Jesus? Ah! if he be from God, if he doeth many miracles, if he be the Messiah, the deliverer promised to Israel, rejoice ye Chief Priests, be the first to point him out to the people as the teacher they ought to follow, as the Saviour they ought to love, as the God in whom they should place their whole trust. It is you who ought to be well acquainted with the prophecies that promised him to

• \S St. John x. 31.

the world. You who were placed like sentinels in Israel—who ought to know the moment of the re-establishment of David's spiritual kingdom. Why are you not at your posts—why do you not proclaim from the pulpit of Moses the Messiah, the King, and the Saviour? But say they, if all believe on him, what would become of our influence, our honors, consideration, and places? Here is the true and secret spring of your actions, and what you dread more than even the Romans. Your idol is Pride, before that idol all must bend the knee, even the King of Glory, when he came to call Lazarus from his grave; he who had been promised to the world during four thousand years of prophecy. "The Romans shall come." What matter, ye children of Abraham who glory in your freedom, who far from being conquered by the masters of the universe, can boast that you have never been subject to the yoke of the Cæsars; you who obstinately refused them the title of Lord, yet are trembling when the question before you is eternal truth, the glory of your nation, or the everlasting salvation of the immortal souls which God has confided to your care. Where now is your boasted courage? But this was only a pretext, for the Chief Priests knew well that the Romans tolerated from policy the religion of all the nations they conquered: and the Jews would not be exterminated sooner, for believing in Jesus than for believing in Moses.—Nevertheless, what powerful reasoning it would be if the speaker could inspire his colleagues with a fear

of the extermination of themselves, their place (or temple), and their nation. There would be an end of their honors, their temple, their revenues. So we are still at the beginning of our argument, it was necessary he should be condemned.

How blind is that man who rebels against God ! it was ever true, that “* the wicked worketh a deceitful work.” The Chief Priests condemned Jesus to death, lest all men should believe on him, but it was precisely his death which did, and ever will, spread belief in Jesus.

St. Peter, at his first preaching, reproached the people on account of this death. and by so doing moved to compunction, and converted to the truth, five thousand persons. The Chief Priests condemned Jesus, lest the Romans should take away their place and nation ; in so doing, by putting the finishing stroke to their transgressions, they drew on themselves the last judgment of a holy and just God, and the Romans really came and annihilated their Chief Priests, their place and nation. If there were but one spark of wisdom among the enemies of Christ : if the bands which covered their eyes were not so thick, they would tremble to expose themselves to the danger of being found “† fighting against God.”

Such were the arguments brought before the assembly when Caiaphas, who as High Priest, presided in this wicked Council rose, and feeling impatient at the

* Prov. xi. 18.

† Acts v. 30.

length of this discussion, cried out in an angry voice, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should perish not." Expedient for us! Here then is the motive to which all others should be subservient, this is the shameful consideration which is to silence justice itself. "It is expedient for us:"—he must therefore be condemned. How these words disclose the secret thoughts of these judges! What a lesson to future generations! It is probable that the rest of these rulers had not the impudence to expose publicly the baseness of their minds, but in default of virtue had a certain share of hypocrisy. God permitted the High Priest, the successor of Aaron, to lay open to the world, the hidden motives of those whose actions warred against eternal truth. Self-interest, or expediency, avowed or concealed under the cloak of hypocrisy, was the Deity or Prince of this world, the impure idol to which every thing was to be sacrificed; and in submission to this idol, it was decided on, that Jesus should not be "let alone," as some of the members of the Sanhedrim had proposed—they dared not combat with the truth, so they must destroy it; they cared not if Jesus were condemned, it was necessary he should die. "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people:" And who could be surprised at this? Who does not know that impiety loosens the rein of that enmity that lurks in the heart of unregenerated man. " * Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."

* 1 St. John iii. 15.

Whether in will or in deed signifies but little in the eyes of God. It might be said, that Caiaphas had the interest of the nation at heart—thus it would seem that the principle is not new which sanctions the death of an innocent man for the public good; Caiaphas appears to have been of that opinion—to him the death of our Lord, was a measure of policy, a state proceeding, but it rather deserved the name of a measure of Satan, and the policy of Demons. The cries wrung from millions of victims, sacrificed to this expediency, would reach from earth to heaven, and proclaim more loudly than all that we could advance, the moral degradation of the human race. But we have already shewn that the national safety was in no way implicated, in the faith of the people, and the members of this Council were guided by self-interest, and unbounded rage. What an humiliating truth! Oh Jesus! thou hast died for such people; thou hast died to raise them from their fallen state; thou hast died to purchase a new life for us.

But how marvellous! it is this identical death, prophesied by Caiaphas, which procured us salvation and deliverance. Like Balaam, he intended to curse, but pronounced a blessing; he permitted a murder to be committed, and by so doing perfected the great sacrifice of that atonement which has been the redemption of the world, “And this he spake not of himself, but being High Priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation.” Caiaphas being High Priest, president of the Supreme Ecclesiastical

Court, his involuntary prophecy necessarily came from above, and was considered of the greatest importance. It had a solemn sound in the ears of all that surrounded him, and will go down to the latest posterity. "And this spake he not of himself."—The impiety of the thought, and the wickedness of the proposal, did originate in him, or rather in the evil spirit, but oh! how great was the wisdom and power of God! Caiaphas imagined he acted according to the dictates of his own will, and that he was serving the cause of the prince of darkness, whereas God made him unconsciously a Prophet of the truth, an Apostle of the glad tidings of salvation. God could have visited this enemy of our Lord with some of the awful judgments with which he had often punished impiety—he might have caused him to die like Herod, eaten by worms. But no, it pleased the Almighty that even his own enemy should be made available to his glory, and that this blind instrument of Satan should actually announce the plan of mercy which he intended for the redemption of a sinful world—that the words which proceeded from his impure and angry lips, should be a canticle of praise and blessing to succeeding ages. Who could oppose the will of God? The enemies of Christ assembled, and from one of their Council, God ordained the fulfilment of the promises respecting the glorious reign of his Son—their Chief announced to the world the event by which all the powers of darkness will be trodden under foot. God sometimes makes use of his

enemies as instruments of his purpose; he can draw praise from hell itself, and compel the powers of darkness as well as the Angels of Heaven, to cry “ * Glory to God in the highest.”

Condemn, then, and crucify the Prince of Life, ye wicked Councillors, if his death be the signal of your condemnation, it is round his cross that will be gathered together in one, not that nation only, but all the children of God; there they will meet our Evangelist, and hold converse with him. Jesus died not only for the children of Israel, whose interests this Council professed to have at heart, but for the ransomed of all people, nations, tongues, and tribes, which were made his by the election of his divine grace.

Ye children of God, who are yet scattered abroad and exposed to trials and strifes, consider the intent of him who died for you—he will gather you together, will bring all your thoughts and affections captive to the foot of the Cross, will separate you from the world, gather you into his sheepfold—and oh! what have you to fear! Listen to the prayer which he sent up to Heaven for you, “† Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.” This prayer is granted. There are none even of your enemies who may not in the end contribute to your eternal salvation, and give glory to the God who saved you. It is your glorious portion to be gathered

* Luke ii. 14.

† St. John xvii. 24.

together from your dispersion, and to be united for ever with the children of God. Who could pluck you from the hand of the Almighty? “* For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

In delivering these lectures could my feeble voice address some troubled spirit whom Jesus invites to taste of heavenly consolation—could I reach those who in any way oppose the merciful intentions of God towards them, let me anxiously beseech them, even with tears in my eyes, to take pity on themselves, to come while it is yet time to the only source of life, to the Saviour of sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! yet a little while, ye immortal spirits, ye will see face to face the Lord of Glory, who will come again, not to weep at the grave of his friend, or lament the folly of those who rejected him, but to exercise justice and judgment: to “* take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I exhort you to love Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus, that your love may be perfected when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the Holy Angels.

But thou only art able, almighty Saviour, to raise us as thou didst Lazarus from the all-detestable grave, to restore life to our withered bones, to give us a new

* Rom. viii. 38 and 39.

† 2 Thess. i. 8.

heart capable of loving thee, and a new life to devote to thy service. Oh! may thy word resound within us, may our spiritual death and corruption prove no hindrance to our receiving that word “* which calleth those things that be not, as though they were.” Oh! may thy infinite love awaken a sacred flame in our stony hearts, and displace our self-love and corruption. To love thee, oh! merciful Redeemer—to love thee with all our minds, with all our souls, with all our strength—this is the object of our lives; the great end for which thou hast given us our existence, and ransomed us at so great a price. Let us then obtain this end before it be too late; snatch us from perdition, save us as it were in spite of ourselves—Oh! rather let us love thee with willing hearts, and consecrate our lives, thoughts, and affections to thee. Art thou not the God of all goodness and mercy? To whom else could we fly? Thou only hast the words of eternal life.

* Romans iv. 17.





